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IMPEACH GORE
by Jeffrey Rosen

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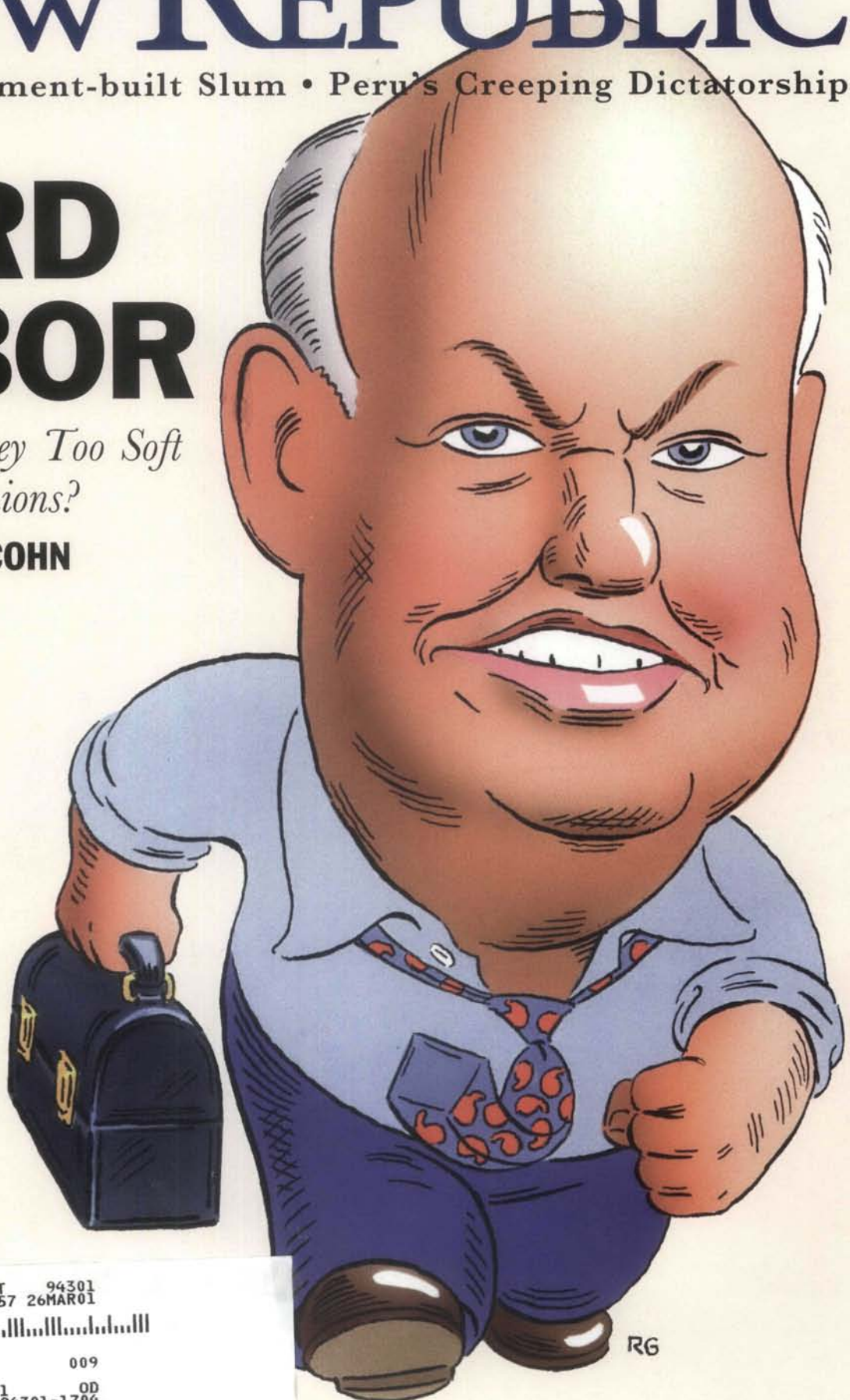
HARD LABOR

Is John Sweeney Too Soft to Save the Unions?

BY JONATHAN COHN



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Above: *Chain Reaction (Anagram)*, 1996, vegetable-dye transfer on paper, courtesy of Pace Wildenstein

Left: Robert Rauschenberg, Alex Hay, and Carolyn Brown performing *Pelican*, New York Theater Rally, May 24–26, 1965

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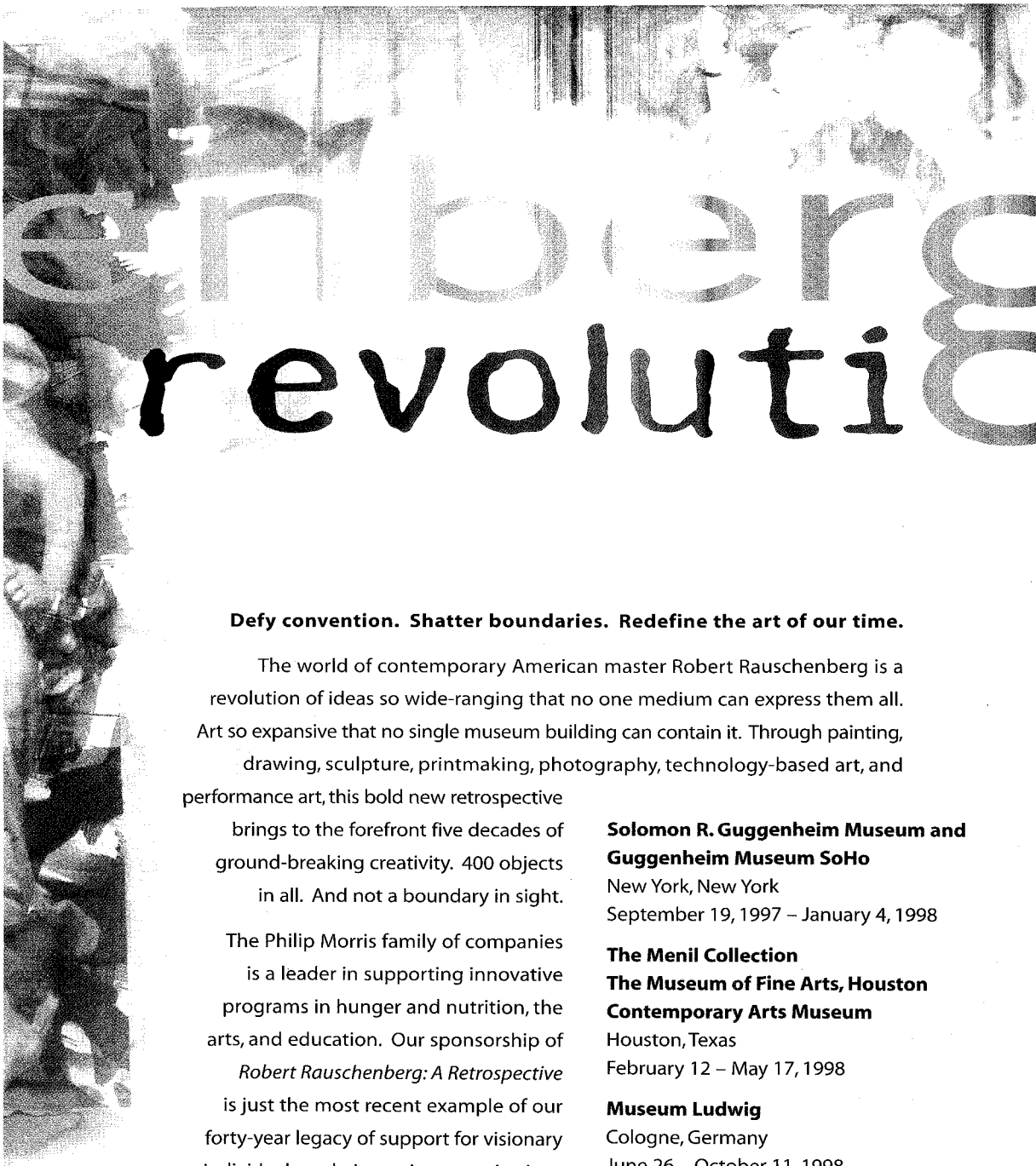

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Impeach Gore

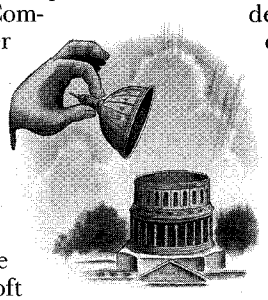
Readers of this ideologically diverse magazine have been treated to a bracing range of opinion about whether or not Vice President Gore broke the law when he telephoned his supporters from the White House to ask for campaign contributions. Now that congressional Republicans are once again calling for an independent counsel, TNR has asked your legal affairs editor to examine the record as dispassionately as possible. My naughty conclusion: Gore should not be investigated by an independent counsel; instead, he should be impeached.

The law in question says that "It shall be unlawful" for any federal employee "to solicit or receive any contribution" within the meaning of federal election law "in any room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties." The broad purpose of the Pendleton Act, written in 1883, was to prevent federal civil servants from shaking down political contributions from their colleagues on federal property. And according to the Congressional Research Service, the law has never been enforced to prosecute a federal official for soliciting campaign contributions from someone who is not in a federal building.

Although Gore can't be encompassed within the spirit of the act, a textualist might claim that he violated its letter. The vice president's former chief of staff, Jack Quinn, argues that while Gore may have been in the White House when he asked for campaign contributions, the solicitation took place elsewhere. He invokes a 1908 Supreme Court decision, *U.S.* v. *Thayer*, which involved solicitations mailed to federal postal workers. In affirming Thayer's conviction, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes held that "the solicitation was in the place where the letter was received." And it's plausible to claim that a telephone call, like a letter, is completed in the place where the call is received.

On the other hand, as Edward Zelinsky of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law points out, Holmes was concerned that Thayer's letter may have been lost before it was delivered, in which case no solicitation would have occurred. A court today, Zelinsky argues, could conclude that telephone conversations take place simultaneously at both ends, and therefore Gore's solicitation occurred where the call was made.

In rejecting a congressional request for an independent counsel on April 14, Attorney General Janet Reno concluded that there was no "specific and credible evidence" that the vice president had solicited a "contribution" within the meaning of the Federal Election laws, because he had solicited "soft money" rather than "hard money." It now appears that some of the money Gore raised was deposited in the Democratic National Committee's "hard money" rather than "soft money" accounts. And since that opens the question of whether Gore knew that some of the money he raised would go to advertising designed to influence the Clinton-Gore election, the claim that he intended to raise only "soft money" may be hard to sustain.



So there's a plausible, if debatable, argument that Gore may have violated the Pendleton Act; and it hinges on whether or not you think that telephones are like letters. (That's the question on which there's "no controlling legal authority.") What should be done? Congressional Republicans are once again calling on the attorney general to request the appointment of an independent counsel. But because there are few facts in dispute, the only purpose of an independent counsel would be to decide whether an obscure nineteenth-century civil service law should be construed, for the first time in history, to prevent the president and vice president from asking their supporters for support. This is a policy judgment, not a legal one; and in a democracy, policy should be made by elected officials.

Like many people, I'm convinced by Justice Scalia's powerful dissenting opinion in *Morrison* v. *Olson*. He argued that the independent counsel law is unconstitutional because it allows unelected judges, rather than the democratically elected president, to appoint prosecutors. The Constitution says that Congress can allow courts to appoint "inferior officers"; but it's hard to see how an independent counsel, who has unreviewable power to investigate the president, is "inferior" to him.

Having supported the reauthorization of the independent counsel law, Gore can hardly argue that it is unconstitutional. But on policy grounds alone, it seems clear that no independent counsel would have the political credibility to decide whether or not to apply the Pendleton Act to the vice president. An independent counsel, after all, would be appointed by the same judges who appointed Kenneth Starr. If these judges chose another Republican in the Starr mold, Democrats could fairly object that any prosecution was a partisan vendetta.

Perhaps the judges, chastened by criticism of their appointment of Starr, would appoint a Common Cause type. This, however, would raise problems of its own. Guided by their elected superiors, prosecutors routinely decide not to indict people for hypertechnical violations of the law. But even the most *independent* independent counsels have an incentive to justify their own existence by prosecuting minute infractions.

As Akhil Amar and Brian Kalt argue in the current issue of *Nexus*, it was precisely because prosecutions of the president and vice president are inevitably political that the framers of the Constitution created a political remedy for alleged wrongdoing by high officials: impeachment. The framers gave Congress the impeachment power because it is a publicly accountable body, well suited to make political judgments about whether political leaders have violated the law.

Indeed, the Department of Justice has long held that the Constitution requires the president to be impeached *before* he can be criminally prosecuted. Some legal scholars believe that this immunity from prosecution should apply to the vice president, and indeed all "civil officers" as well; but the prosecutions of Aaron Burr and Spiro Agnew suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, because Clinton and Gore are accused of making the same kind of calls from the same place, it would be odd to argue that Gore can be prosecuted, while Clinton cannot.

Instead of hiding behind the independent counsel law, Republicans should have the courage of their convictions, and show that they are engaged in a genuine search for the truth, not just a partisan attack. They should, in other words, try to impeach Gore in the House and convict him in the Senate. In the course of debating whether or not to impeach Gore, the House Rules Committee would hold public hearings. During the hearings, it would become clear that, until very recently, congressmen routinely asked for campaign contributions on cell phones while sitting in the corridors of the Capitol. In applying a new and different standard to the White House, Con-

continued on page 41

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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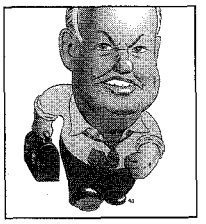

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CORRESPONDENCE

Disability dispute

To the editors:
Ruth Shalit's factual and conceptual grasp of the issues in learning disability diagnostics ("Defining Disability Down," August 25), as well as her skeptical tone, is correct. As a board-certified neuropsychologist who is often asked to testify on issues of learning disability, I can support her conclusions that brain damage is often inappropriately diagnosed.

I would only add that defining deviancy down is more pervasive and more far-reaching than Shalit may be aware. Closed head injury is now diagnosed in people we used to call "whiplashed," and residential rehabilitation centers are charging hundreds of thousands of dollars to provide them with retraining in basic life skills. Even clinical medicine is not immune: the diagnostic band for glucose tolerance tests has recently been broadened, meaning more people will be diagnosed with diabetes than ever before. People used to struggle to overcome real infirmities or hide them. Now, a disability label confers special powers, benefits and rights, not to mention a shot at a sizable jury award.

We used to have a silly fear that the occasional black pilot or surgeon we came across got their job only because of affirmative action. In the next century, this fear will be replaced by the more realistic fear that the pilot of your plane failed basic training but was nonetheless forced on the airline by Washington because of Attention Deficit Disorder!

MANFRED FRANK GREIFFENSTEIN
Royal Oak, Michigan

To the editors:
As someone who has a learning disability, I am afraid that Ruth Shalit's "Defining Disability Down" has done a great disservice to the integrity of your magazine.

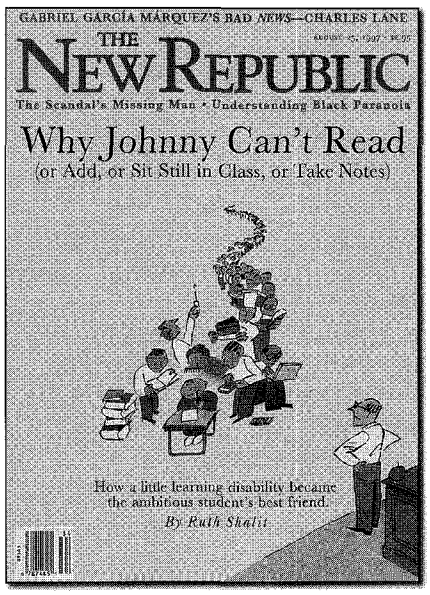
I was given double time on both the SAT and GRE. In college I was given the option of either doing class exams on computer or taking extra time to make my handwriting somewhat legible. I hardly think that these minor compensations were unreasonable or unfair as Shalit suggests.

In an incredible demonstration of ignorance, Shalit actually tries to challenge the very existence of learning disabilities. How would the editors of TNR react to an article denying things like the nature of homosexuality? (People are born learning-disabled just as they are born homosexual.)

Shalit treats Boston University's Jon Westling as a crusading hero against political correctness. She glosses over his admitted right-wing political agenda and the fact that he fabricated "Somnolent Samantha." Meanwhile people with L.D.s, and their advocates who dare to assert themselves, are presented as fanatics, poor students, lazy students or ambitious cheats.

ALEXANDER SIMON
Stamford, Connecticut

To the editors:
Ruth Shalit's "Defining Disability Down" is chilling in its implications. When the phonologically challenged law student, who has received preferential treatment throughout her academic career, is refused employment by the law firms to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The Scandal's Missing Man • Understanding Black Paranoia
Why Johnny Can't Read
(or Add, or Sit Still in Class, or Take Notes)
How a little learning disability became the ambitious student's best friend.
By Ruth Shalit

which she applies, she may well sue them for discrimination against the learning-disabled. After all, it's got to be *somebody's* fault that she can't get hired.

We should not be surprised by this; it was the psychiatric industry that recently redefined coffee drinking, playing video games, shyness, jet lag, clumsiness and yes, snoring, as mental disorders. It is a small step to reduce laziness and stupidity to pathology as well.

DAVE REDDALL
North Truro, Massachusetts

To the editors:
I don't want to minimize the immensely serious issues raised by the existence of genuine learning disabilities or to seem to support the various enormities of the administration of Boston University, but Ruth Shalit's "Defining Disability Down" inevitably provokes the following reflection. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that some psychological disorders manifest themselves in an imperfect ability to perform certain cognitive tasks: if you have it, you can't add, for example. The disorder is a sufficient condition for the inability. Shalit shows that in an excess of zeal, schools, parents and activists are now increasingly assuming that the inability to perform such tasks is in itself evidence that a disorder exists: if you can't add, then you have it. They take the disorder to be a necessary condition for the inability. That is like thinking that because rain requires a cloudy sky, a cloudy sky guarantees rain.

That invalid syllogism, and the general confusion of necessary and sufficient conditions it represents, is a disturbing, if common, failure of rationality. By the logic, then, of the very people who champion learning disabilities indiscriminately on the basis of such thinking, we can conclude that they are themselves suffering from dysrationalia, "a level of rationality, as demonstrated in thinking and behavior, that is significantly below the level of the individual's intellectual capacity."

ALEXANDER NEHAMAS
Princeton, New Jersey

To the editors:
Ruth Shalit relies on numerous half-truths in her conspicuous effort to portray learning-disabled students as opportunists. Perhaps her most manipulative "mistake" is reporting that three Boston University student plaintiffs, who, she claims, "came off as something other than inspiring champions for disabled rights," received every accommodation requested under "the Westling regime." The students Shalit chooses to mention—Benjamin Freedman, Jordan Nodelman and me—received accommodations *by court order.* An injunction imposed by the Boston Federal District Court prohibited Mr. Westling from denying students accommodations they'd been granted prior to the implementation of his haphazard new policies. In other words, the students received their accommodations *despite* "the Westling regime."

Given the purpose of the class-action suit, Shalit's misrepresentation of the granting of these students' accommodations is reprehensible, but it is nothing compared to her strategic omission of what happened to those students whose accommodations were denied by Mr. Westling prior to the filing of the lawsuit. Shalit ignores these students entirely. Had she attended a single day of the trial she might have felt compelled to mention testimony, for example, from the plaintiff whose foreign language course substitution was retroactively denied after three and a half years of undergraduate study and thousands of dollars spent

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on tuition. To insist that this student and others like her are anything other than inspiring champions for disabled rights is not only cruel but naïve.

On Friday, August 15, Judge Patti Saris ruled that B.U. violated federal law when it redesigned its policies for learning-disabled students. Judge Saris found that Westling, "fueled mostly by popular press and anecdotal accounts," shamefully relied on "uninformed stereotypes about the learning disabled." Shalit is guilty of the same.

ELIZABETH GUCKENBERGER
Boston, Massachusetts

Ruth Shalit replies:
Elizabeth Guckenberger strongly suggests that had he not been restrained by the terms of the court's stand-still agreement, Boston University President Jon Westling would have summarily revoked all of the hard-fought "accommodations"—extra time on exams, a reduced course load and priority registration—that have been made available to Guckenberger since her matriculation at law school. There is no evidence that such dire consequences would have flowed from Westling's proposed policy change, which specified only that all diagnoses of learning disability be recent and prepared by a physician or licensed clinical psychologist. But Guckenberger is right when she points out that even this modest reform was rejected by Judge Patti Saris as an unduly burdensome obstacle to her right to special treatment under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Unkind cut

To the editors:
Craig Turk suggests in "Kinder Cut" (August 25) that, because procreation has been found by the courts to be a "fundamental right," chemical castration cannot be imposed as a condition of parole for certain sexual predators unless the penalty is narrowly tailored to address a compelling state interest.

Procreation only enjoys such special protection under the Constitution because it has been held to be a "liberty," within the meaning of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, of which no one may be deprived without due process of law.

I would have thought that a criminal conviction would constitute "due process of law" par excellence. That, after all, is all that is necessary to deprive a person of physical liberty, which is even more fundamental a right than the right to procreate. We should remember that the law on chemical castration would apply only to convicted criminals, who have already been deprived of that much more fundamental right.

Since the law would provide an option under which convicts could regain their physical freedom, and since the state is not obligated to offer parole at all, I have a hard time understanding how the proposed law causes a constitutional injury.

JAMES M. GUINIVAN
Annandale, Virginia

Classics blunder

To the editors:
The statement by Cinqué Henderson ("Myths of the Unloved," August 25): "Anger, Aristotle argued a thousand years ago, is the only passion that must be justified by speech and reason," is off the mark by over a thousand years. Aristotle lived from 384 to 322 B.C.

PHILIP KLUBES
Kensington, Maryland

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Letters may also be sent electronically to: TNR@aol.com

Picasso—
The Early Years, *1892–1906*

Pablo Picasso, *Lady in Blue* (detail), 1901. Oil on canvas. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. ©1997 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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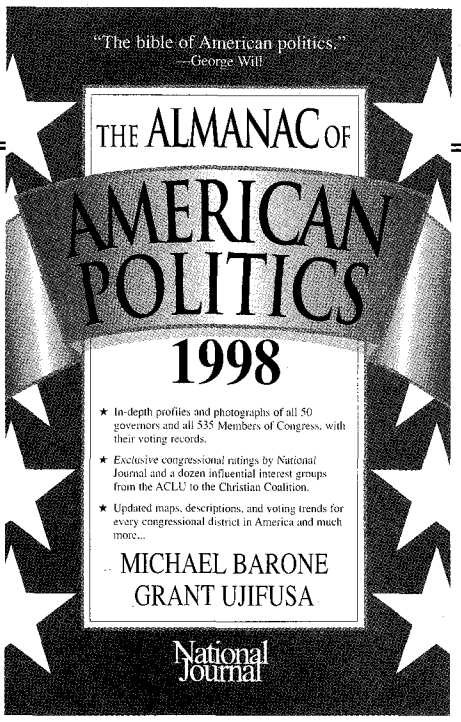
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OCTOBER 6, 1997

NEW CONGO, OLD EXCUSES

Four months ago, Laurent Kabila and his army swept into Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, toppling the corrupt government of Mobutu Sese Seko and changing the country's name back to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since that time, the new president has been portrayed in two oddly contradictory ways by the American press. The first version might be called "high-concept puff." With the war over, some U.S. magazines and newspapers have stepped back to mull the big picture of African politics. The conventional wisdom they have produced is that Kabila is the latest in a promising new breed of no-nonsense African rulers. Strongmen like Uganda's Yoweri Museveni and Rwanda's Paul Kagame, both of whom lent troops and supplies to Kabila's campaign against Mobutu, are said to be honest, tough-minded and technocratic. As *Time* put it: "They are alike in their antipathy to corruption, their disgust with the old ways, their outrage at how badly their countries were run." Increasingly, support for such men appears to be the guiding principle of the Clinton administration's Africa policy as well. If they're not exactly Jeffersonian democrats, the thinking goes, at least they're keeping order, and at least they're not massacring their people like so many African leaders before them.

Unfortunately, the latter point may not be true. At the very same time these upbeat analyses were leading most papers, other stories, one of them a bold *Washington Post* exposé on June 8, were documenting the fact that Kabila's men have indeed massacred hundreds of Congolese, as well as Rwandan refugees living among the Congolese.

This second genre of story—call it "low-concept nasty"—has tracked Kabila's endless and transparently dishonest attempts to keep United Nations investigators from looking into the plight of 200,000 Rwandan refugees who disappeared from eastern Zaire while it was under the control of Kabila's rebel forces. The stalling began in early July, when Kabila announced he would deny entry to Roberto Garreton, the respected Chilean human rights lawyer heading the U.N. probe. Kabila was brazen enough to do this at a time when he was utterly dependent on the international community for aid. But he was betting on the squishiness of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the bet paid off. Confronted with Kabila's challenge to international norms and to his own authority as secretary-general, Annan caved. He took Garreton off the case. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, faced with this clear evidence that Kabila was not quite as honest and technocratic as the high-concept puff stories had suggested, nevertheless supported Annan's decision to conciliate the new boss in Kinshasa.

Predictably, Kabila pocketed these concessions and began trying to impose even stiffer conditions on the U.N. The U.N. must investigate human rights abuses going back to March 1993, he demanded, but it must *not* look into any murders that took place after May 17, 1997, the day Kabila took power. He informed Annan that he would also refuse to deal with Garreton's replacement, a retired judge from Togo. He would not even issue visas to security guards for the U.N. investigating team, insisting instead that they travel with twenty-four government "facilitators," each of whom would require a daily stipend of $700. To top it off, Kabila instructed Congolese travel agents not to sell the investigators plane tickets for trips within the country.

Even in the face of these absurdities, Annan kept trying to appease Kabila. We must understand, he said, that Kabila's government has legitimate historical fears of the U.N., supposedly because of the intervention by U.N. peacekeeping troops in the Congo crisis of 1960. "We need to have patience with this mistrust and hope that over time they will come to understand that the international community wants to help," Annan observed. For its part, the United States has already started sending the $10 million in economic aid to non-governmental organizations in Congo that Washington promised shortly after the takeover.

This grotesque game has to stop. In other parts of the world, the United States judges governments by their commitment to democracy and human rights. In the Congo, the United States failed utterly to help the country's democratic opposition oust Mobutu. Now that Kabila has taken power through the barrel of a gun, banning the democratic parties that America had already betrayed once before, the U.S. government must not adopt the view that he is part of a new breed of African leaders who don't need normal democratic accountability to govern well.

Western apologias for dashing African autocrats, are, alas, nothing new. In his day, too, Mobutu was hailed as a force for progress and stability. Four decades ago, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere was praised as a deep thinker who translated Shakespeare into Swahili; consequently, bil-

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lions of dollars of foreign development aid were poured into his ill-conceived socialist schemes. But good government doesn't depend on captivating personalities, it depends on the rule of law. For four months, the United States and the United Nations have been indulging Kabila for no particular reason other than the fact that he replaced Mobutu. Instead they should be insisting, quite forcefully, that the Congo open itself to human-rights inspection, and begin to build real democratic institutions. The rules that govern the political and moral life of nations shouldn't be any different in Africa than they are anywhere else. If the continent's sorry post-colonial history has taught us anything, it has taught us that. •

GETTING EVEN

Finally American diplomacy in the Middle East has become undiplomatic. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to the Israelis, the Palestinians and the Arabs was unlike the abject pilgrimages made by some of her predecessors. For a start, she made "even-handedness" even-handed. "Even-handedness" used to be a Foggy Bottom encryption for a policy of pressure on Israel. This time, however, the secretary let both sides have it. In its tone and its substance, Albright's strictures to Yasir Arafat about his responsibility for crushing Palestinian terrorism seemed genuine, and genuinely grim. She seems utterly immune to the romance of the Palestinians that clouded the judgment of previous peace processors (and led the Israelis to mistrust "honest brokers"). The political violence that is being visited upon Israel is unacceptable, and it is undermining the willingness of many Israelis to proceed with what will almost certainly be the creation of a Palestinian state on their border. If Benjamin Netanyahu is responsible for having failed to act against some of the recent Israeli provocations in Jerusalem and elsewhere, as Arafat claims, then Arafat is responsible for having failed to act against recent Palestinian provocations, as Netanyahu claims. No, bulldozers are not like bombs (and it was Albright who originally made this point); but the distinction between bulldozers and bombs is no excuse to unleash the bulldozers, at least if Israel really is interested in a peace with the Palestinians. Albright's proposed "time-out" on "unilateral acts" by Israel that provoke the Palestinians seems reasonable and necessary, and in no way detrimental to Israel's war against Palestinian terror. But it was not only Albright's plain talk to the parties (she wasn't even enchanted by Assad!) that was refreshing. So, too, was her plain talk about the American role in this dispiriting mess. Albright made it clear that little was accomplished, that nothing can be imposed, and that the future of American foreign policy in the entirety of the universe will not be held hostage to the haggling in the Middle East. The era of Warren Christopher is officially over. At last a secretary of state, too, is disabused. It is hard not to share Albright's dourness. •

NOTEBOOK

INDECENT EXPOSURE: The Christian Action Network believes that the National Endowment for the Arts should be abolished because it funds "blasphemous, homo-erotic filth 'art'." But this crusade has lost momentum in recent years, as the NEA has shied away from funding the controversial projects. And so, lest Americans forget what it is they're supposed to find so revolting, last week the Christian Action Network announced that it was posting full-color graphic replicas of forty offensive NEA-funded projects on its Internet site (www.canetwork.com). "This [will] be the first time this NEA trash has been put on the Internet," boasted the group's president, Martin Mawyer. Thank heavens! Previously, only an elite few with the wherewithal to visit avant-garde art museums could appreciate offensive NEA art. Now any 9-year-old with a modem can gawk at a bullwhip stuck in Robert Mapplethorpe's derrière. Luckily for the Christian Action Network, the Communications Decency Act didn't pass constitutional muster.

UNKOSHER PORK: No phenomenon on Capitol Hill is more revealing of the decrepitude of the Republican revolution than the rise of Bud Shuster. The GOP Congressman from Pennsylvania is chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which puts him in charge of doling out billions of dollars in road and bridge construction funds. This is especially convenient for Shuster given the fact that Gary Ruskin, head of the Congressional Accountability Project, has been trying for months to get someone to file a House ethics complaint against Shuster based on press reports that Shuster had steered legislative favors to his campaign contributors. Last year, Representative Luis Gutierrez of Illinois and retiring Representatives Pat Schroeder of Colorado and Pat Williams of Montana took up the cause. Yet the session expired without any action, and Ruskin has no takers for when the committee reconvenes. "Well, certainly people in the committee will hesitate to declare war on the chairman of the infrastructure committee," concedes Democrat Congressman Jerrold Nadler of New York. Shuster wants to spend so much on pork that the bill will shatter the recent balanced budget agreement. Clifford Winston, an expert on infrastructure at the Brookings Institution, recently told *The Washington Post* that "the empirical evidence suggests we're wasting billions of dollars" with this transportation bill. No doubt Shuster considers it money well spent. •

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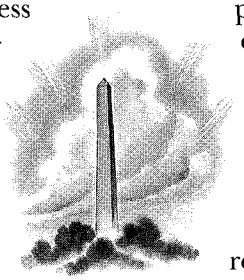
WASHINGTON SCENE

SLUMMING IT

By Michael Brus

At Waterside Mall in Washington, D.C., there are two escalators leading nowhere. When the mall opened twenty-five years ago, the escalators brought shoppers to the second floor; now all you find at the top is a sealed door leading to a suite of offices that the Environmental Protection Agency has recently started to vacate.

The EPA's soon-to-be-abandoned headquarters are symbolic of the federal government's expansive and ill-fated plans to construct a new kind of city in Washington's Southwest quarter. Old Southwest was a slum with a mixed-income population made up of large numbers of African Americans and smaller numbers of white ethnics. In the 1954 Supreme Court decision clearing the way for the redevelopment of Southwest, Justice William O. Douglas's majority opinion said Congress had the power "to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy."



To be sure, Southwest needed government help. Many of the houses had wood frames; many lacked central heating, indoor toilets and electricity. "I visited so-called 'residential' courts in the centers of city blocks where one single spigot provided all the water for dozens of housing units," *Washington Post* reporter Jack Eisen recalled in a 1983 column. But there was more to old Southwest than met the eye. Census figures at the time showed that many decrepit-looking homes were actually structurally sound. And there was a semblance of communal life. "The experts couldn't see the social networks," says local journalist Sam Smith. "This was a community that worked pretty well," says Howard Gillette, a local historian at George Washington University. "Within the black community you had people of all income statuses, which you don't have right now. [Redevelopment] was a stunning example of the way in which aesthetics triumphed over social justice and social insight."

Over the course of four years—1954 to 1958—the federal government tore down 99 percent of the buildings in Southwest and replaced them with the same number of dwellings on only half the area. Only a few hundred of the new homes were affordable to those evicted from the old ones. A 1966 study by the Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital Area determined that almost all of the former residents who came back ended up in public housing.

Conceived by some planners as an apartment building with shops, the Waterside complex was supposed to be the hub of the renewal area. But developer Charles Bresler, responding to market demands for office space, eventually built offices in addition to some of the stores. Bresler—who served in the Maryland state legislature under then-Governor and future Vice President Spiro Agnew—had been awarded the Waterside project in 1971 without competitive bidding, according to a 1978 WJLA-TV news report. Skeptics said at the time that he was appointed solely to create a place to put President Nixon's newly minted EPA.

A gruff, defensive man, Bresler never endeared himself to the community—and neither did Waterside. In 1979, a mayor's task force pressed Bresler for $90,000 in back rent. Citizens groups protested, calling dumps at construction sites "a ragged and unsightly mess." "There are offices and a dirty shopping center where citizens had envisioned community service stores," a community leader said in 1979. Residents tried to remove Bresler, but the District of Columbia government had no legal leverage. To compound the problem, a subway project made a mess of the area around the Waterside Mall during the 1970s. (The station finally opened in 1992.) As Waterside floundered, Bresler converted its upper level into an annex for the EPA offices. At its peak in 1989, the number of EPA employees in Waterside equaled half the residential population in Southwest.

The federal government has consistently tried to place new government offices in Southwest—often despite the agencies' own loud protests. Touring the EPA's former space at Waterside, I could see why the agency has decided to move uptown to the luxurious new Ronald Reagan building. Most workers are shunted into tiny cubicles, which are packed so densely that the air conditioning cools only half the room. The rooms are connected by labyrinthine tunnels with large cracks in the walls. Most of the rooms are windowless; on the top floor, asbestos often falls through holes in the ceiling. Even EPA Administrator Carol Browner—who enjoys riding the subway to work—demanded that the agency move once she saw Waterside. As one EPA official jokes, "You know you're at EPA when you go out to a power lunch and find yourself at Blimpie's." Since 1987, 100 EPA employees have claimed building-related health problems, and several have filed lawsuits. When I asked him if he owns a "sick building," Bresler snapped: "That's jerky. Ten people a year? Now what is that?" He blames a carpeting contractor who cut the carpet indoors instead of outdoors, releasing contaminants into the offices.

Waterside's prospects look bleak. The storefronts look decrepit, and without the patronage of EPA employees, many of the businesses will struggle or go bust. Other than a thriving supermarket—the only grocery for miles around—most of Waterside's shops remind you of the kind of businesses you find in the ghetto: a tiny, overpriced video store, a check cashing store, a watch-repair shop, a Roy Rogers. Bresler argues that his property—a million-and-a-half feet of floor

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space near downtown and close to the subway—is inherently valuable. But he has no client to occupy the EPA offices, not to mention his empty stores. And if the EPA's offices sit empty too long, the subway station, too, will deteriorate.

The government's dreams for other areas of Southwest have gone similarly awry. Take L'Enfant Plaza, a cluster of boxy federal office buildings directly behind the old Smithsonian museum building. At noon, L'Enfant is filled with bureaucrats on their lunch breaks. Seven hours later, it's a ghost town. "I don't think they anticipated the kind of dead space they were creating," Gillette said. "Today no one would create such a space, knowing you would have no animation, no way to keep anything alive." Another problematic project is the nearby Portals development. Although the District government solicited bids in 1981, it could not secure a developer until 1985. Construction did not begin until 1989, but only after a brief flap with the District over the percent of minority investors in the development company. Five years later, the government decided to put the Federal Communications Commission in the new site. The FCC balked until a court ordered it to move in.

The privately owned apartments in gentrified Southwest are in the high-rise, condominium style that planners considered avant-garde in the '50s and '60s. To some degree, these dwellings have fulfilled the federal government's progressive ambitions for Southwest: the Census Tract at the heart of the residential area is the only area in Washington whose population is about evenly mixed between whites and blacks. Gillette remembers attending a party at a Southwest condominium. "It was impressive that the people who came to these ceremonies were both black and white," he says. "But it was not income-integrated" like old Southwest.

Indeed, what was once a poor, working-class community is now an integrated, middle-class "residential area" surrounded by a black underclass. Southwest's public housing, along with the rest of the District's, has earned one of the worst quality ratings in the nation, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the projects are now in federal receivership. "It's depressing to see human feces coming up the kitchen sink," says Bobbie McMahan, a tenant of the Greenleaf Public Housing Project. Resident Judy Jones is scared of her neighbors. "The people [are] getting worse," she says. "There's drugs all around me" and "a lot of killing." These residents, the last remnants of the population of old Southwest, haven't had much of any "renewal."

Besides the increase in income segregation, Southwest has lost its sense of community. The typical resident of old Southwest worked, worshipped and socialized in his own neighborhood. Most of today's middle-class residents work and party across town, while much of the underclass does not work at all. The new Southwest is wealthier than the old, but it is a world of government-planned mediocrity, surrounded by government-subsidized poverty. Like so many federal initiatives, the government decided to build Southwest from a blueprint, rather than repair the community's inferior infrastructure. What it has built is a land dominated by bureaucracies and ugly, often substandard, buildings. The federal government has diligently fought economic abandonment of Southwest in the only way it knows how: by nudging unwilling agencies into a part of town where no one really wants to work. But the EPA's abandonment exposes the underside of this "planned community." Beneath the utilitarian malls, condos and projects of Southwest, there are no roots.

MICHAEL BRUS is a former TNR reporter-researcher.

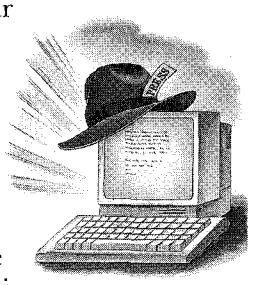
LIMA DISPATCH

CREEPING COUP

By Roger Atwood

To the outsider, it seemed like just a few innocuous words. During the annual Armed Forces Day parade on July 28, Peruvian General Nicolás de Bari Hermoza Ríos spoke before the nation and extended to his troops "my most immense gratitude, on behalf of the Peruvian people," for defeating the Marxist guerrillas. But Hermoza Ríos's arrogation to himself of the right to speak in the people's name sent an unmistakable signal to the millions of Peruvians watching on television: President Alberto Fujimori no longer controls his own government.

A few days after the parade, when a poll asked Peruvians who they thought governed the country, only 35 percent said Fujimori. Thirty-four percent said Vladimiro Montesinos, Fujimori's shadowy presidential intelligence adviser, and 23 percent said the armed forces.



There is good reason for such skepticism. Creeping authoritarianism is everywhere in Peru. Judges are appointed and removed at the whim of the government. The opposition's initiatives in congress are blocked by Fujimori and Montesinos's allies. And the press is routinely intimidated.

Baruch Ivcher, owner of Lima's Frecuencia Latina TV channel and an Israeli citizen until 1984, was recently stripped of his nationality after his station broadcast reports on human rights abuses committed by Montesinos's intelligence agents. Ivcher's treatment was relatively mild by current Peruvian standards. The general editor of the opposition newspaper *La Republica*, Blanca Rosales, was kidnapped, interrogated and threatened

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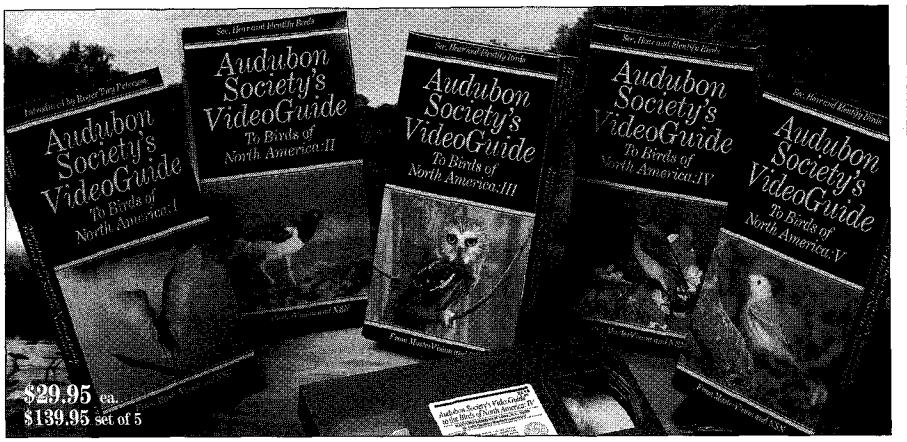
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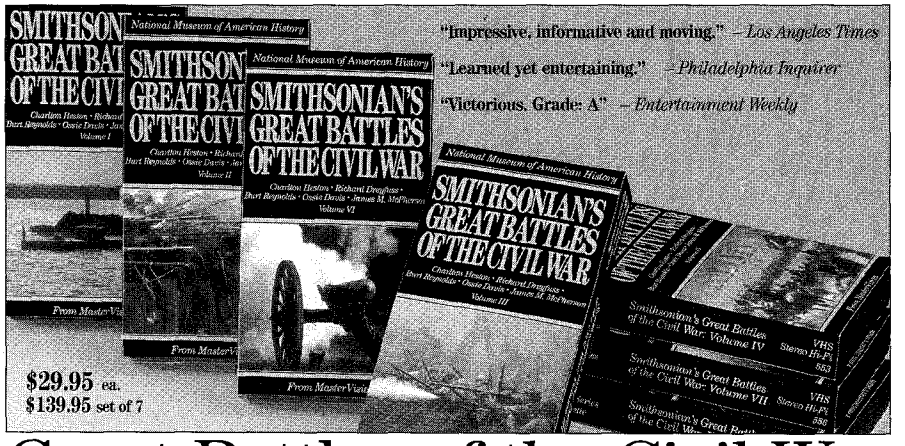
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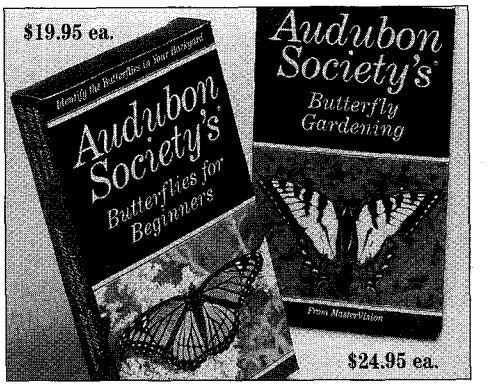

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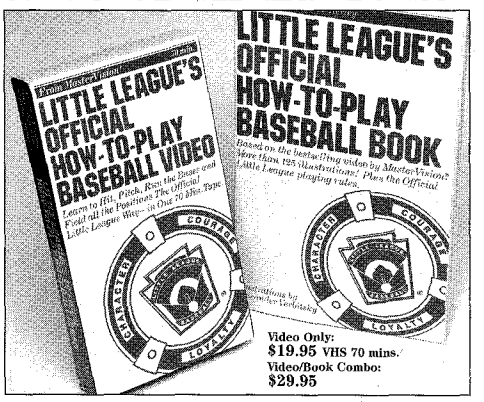

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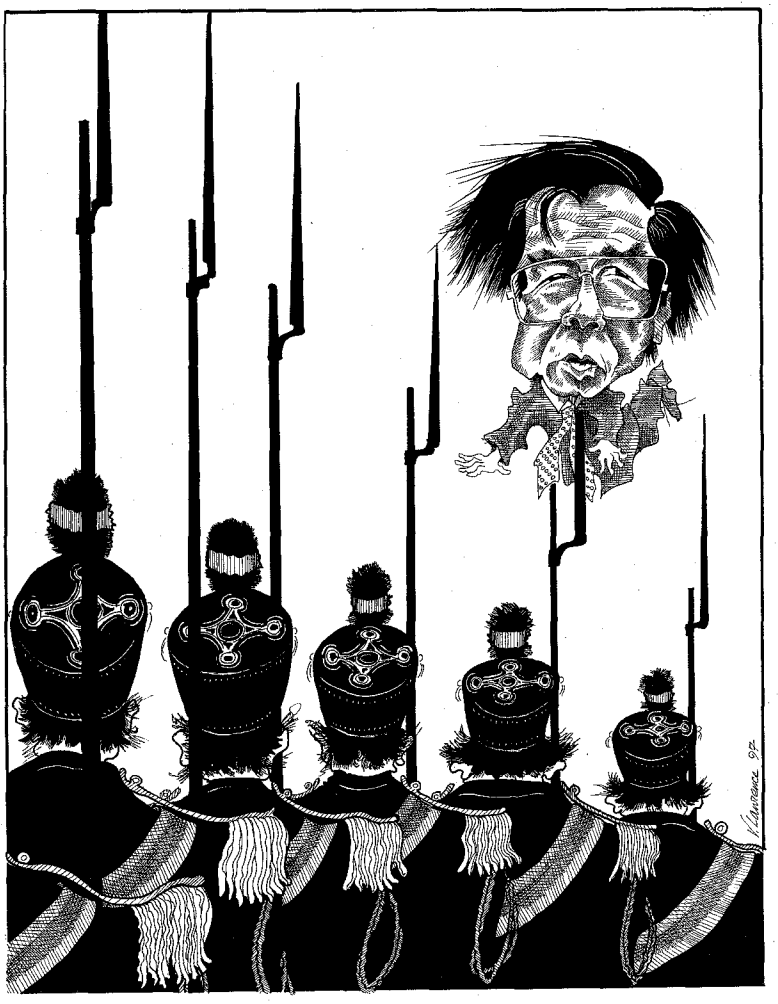
with death by armed thugs who demanded she reveal her news sources. Most Peruvians assume her assailants were state security agents.

Even Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the former U.N. secretary-general and Fujimori's opponent in the last presidential election, has had his phone bugged for nearly a year. We know this because a local television station produced a transcript of months of Pérez de Cuéllar's phone conversations, which it obtained from military sources and turned over to Pérez de Cuéllar's lawyers. "This has become an addiction, a vice, this way the intelligence services have of spying on people," Pérez de Cuéllar said. Life under Fujimori, he added, had gotten so bad it reminded him of his life as Peru's ambassador to Moscow, where, he said, "the whole house was bugged."

Until now, ironically, the biggest threat to Peru's democracy seemed to be Fujimori. In 1992, he dissolved congress and took over the judiciary with the army's support. More recently, when three of the seven judges on the Constitutional Tribunal prevented him from seeking reelection in the year 2000 because of a constitutional ban on three successive terms, Fujimori's allies in congress effectively fired the judges. Seventy-four percent of Peru's judges are now either temporary appointees or substitutes, meaning they can be shunted aside at any time by the executive.



ALBERTO FUJIMORI BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the effort to rid Peru of the Shining Path, the brutal Maoist guerrillas who crippled the country during the '80s, Fujimori gave the military a free hand, and often shielded them from the accusations of international human rights monitors. Guerrilla suspects are still tried by infamous "faceless judges" who allow no cross examination and wear hoods while they hear cases. This Faustian bargain with the military initially helped bolster Fujimori's image as a man in control of a country once seemingly uncontrollable. While he unleashed the military to defeat the Shining Path, the military gave him the chance to rebuild the chaotic economy along the lines of the free-market model of Chile's General Augusto Pinochet, who is deeply admired among Peruvian officers.

But the balance of power may be shifting. With the military still rightfully proud of having defeated the Shining Path and of its lightning commando raid on the Tupac Amaru rebels who were holding seventy-two hostages at the Japanese embassy, Fujimori realizes the officer corps remains his best—and perhaps only—ally. As a result, even though the guerrilla threat is neutralized, he has permitted them to go after the government's more conventional civilian political opponents and showered officers with more and more expensive military toys, like a fleet of MiG-29 fighter jets bought last year from Belarus. (The Soviet jets are believed to cost as much as $350 million, but no one has actually seen them fly, and no one is sure they can.)

The problem is that, with the economy stalling and Fujimori's popularity sagging, the armed forces are getting nervous. And Fujimori may be the next to get purged. "The military men around Fujimori have the power in their hands and think that to give it up means the country will return to chaos, and that they will lose their privileges," said a former high-ranking official who recently left the government. "Power is a nice thing to have."

Instead of a traditional Peruvian military coup, which is messy and risks international condemnation, the military appears to be carrying out a kind of slow-motion seizure of power: gradually assuming more control of the country and searching for a suitably malleable political partner in 2000. That partner may be Alberto Andrade, the popular mayor of Lima, who has swept prostitutes and illegal street vendors from city sidewalks, restored crumbling old plazas and planted flower beds and ornamental trees where stinking heaps of garbage once lay. Polls show that the conservative Andrade is the country's most popular politician. Montesinos is widely reported to have been in contact with Andrade and to have met him twice. (Andrade denies any such meeting.) If 1999

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rolls around with Fujimori's popularity rating stuck where it is now, 30 percent, Andrade might emerge as the military's new "official candidate."

Either way, Peruvian democracy, which survived a decade of brutal guerrilla violence and economic meltdown in the 1980s, may be unable to withstand the military's latest push. Two-thirds of Peruvians say the armed forces are not under the president's control; and "authoritarianism" is cited as the government's number one defect, according to a poll in *Debate* magazine. Indeed, about half of Peruvians already believe they live in a dictatorship.

ROGER ATWOOD worked in Peru as a reporter from 1989 to 1991, and returns frequently.

Rise of a nursing-home heartthrob.

CHEAP SUITS

By Stephen Glass

From her small apartment in a Washington, D.C., suburb, Grace Phillips watches the Senate campaign finance hearings every day on National Empowerment Television. The 74-year-old widow props herself up on her bed and aims her eyes at a small TV set. Occasionally she drinks from a glass of water on the nightstand or chews on black licorice. But even then, her eyes remain riveted to the set—her right hand hunts for the food and carries it to her mouth.

But Phillips has agreed to let me interview her during the hearings, even though she usually prohibits interruptions. And while Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson is speaking, Phillips diverts her attention momentarily, to chat up the "Watergate at hand." Yet I get a stern hush when NET cuts away to their special hearings analyst: Phillips doesn't want to miss a word of what Larry Klayman has to say.

The gray-haired Klayman looks like Judge Wapner from "The People's Court," only younger, and speaks calmly about his right-wing watchdog organization, Judicial Watch. "He's soooo handsome," Phillips coos, as if she were a teen groupie watching "Beverly Hills, 90210." Her eyes light up when Klayman explains a lawsuit against the Commerce Department. She giggles at his jokes that aren't really funny, later admitting she has a crush on Klayman. She even says she thinks a fan magazine about his life would be a hit—with the "Republican widow crowd."

She's probably right. At least two senior citizen homes in Virginia tune in to him regularly; one is thinking of inviting him to speak at its weekly lunch—which is odd, since all the past guests were invited for their expertise in such fields as osteoporosis. An Internet chat site for senior citizen Republican women often digresses into discussions of Klayman's clothing and hairstyle. "Did you like his tie today? It reflects well off of his brushed gray locks," posted one. And, every week, hundreds of fans write to the lawyer, often including checks for his fledgling group. "I saw Larry Klayman speak," writes John from Pittsburgh (Klayman has posted the letter on his web site). "I feel he is going to be one of the most important persons of American history. It was like seeing a speech from Elliott Ness before bringing down Al Capone.... I shook his hand (it was an honor)...."

Klayman's claim to fame is that he files lawsuits. Lots of them. When *National Journal* profiled him last November, Klayman was a plaintiff or a defendant in thirty cases pending before the District of Columbia Superior Court alone; his favorite target, the Clinton administration, is the object of at least nine cases pending throughout the judiciary. In the eyes of many in the legal community, Klayman has such a reputation for filing meritless lawsuits that his critics won't talk on the record. Even the lawyers who *like* him won't talk. "It would be really bad for my future if somehow, say by a typo even, I was misconstrued as even not liking him slightly," says a Washington trade lawyer who has known Klayman for years. "I'd be in court forever."

In the far right's media echo chamber, Klayman thrives: he's a darling not just of NET, but of talk radio and *The Washington Times*, too. What's surprising, though, is that the mainstream press takes him seriously. In a remarkably short span, Klayman has blast-faxed himself to the upper echelons of Washington's spin establishment, mostly by proclaiming himself a talking head on everything newsworthy. Klayman has made himself "available for comment" on the O.J. verdicts, judiciary reform, Ron Brown's death and much, much more. The tactic works: this year, he has been quoted in such establishment papers as *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *Legal Times*, usually with little context except for a description of him as a conservative. (In fairness to Klayman, this article was my idea, not his.)

Klayman didn't start out this way: for years, he toiled as a semi-obscure international trade lawyer in private practice. Then, several years ago, he decided to strike back at a legal establishment that he thought catered to power instead of justice: he created Judicial Watch, a nonprofit organization that he bills as a conservative version of the ACLU. Soon after, he unleashed a torrent of lawsuits targeting the Clinton administration, challenging everything from the handling of records during Filegate to the legality of the president's legal defense fund. Nobody outside the Clinton conspiracy cult much noticed, but then Klayman got lucky: just days before the election, a federal judge said he could depose John Huang, the now notorious former Commerce Department official and Democratic fund-raiser.

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Klayman had sued the Commerce Department, saying it had refused to make public all of the records concerning former Secretary Ron Brown's trade missions. Commerce had indeed rebuffed Klayman's requests to open files, insisting the request would waste taxpayer money, and a federal judge allowed Klayman to conduct some depositions. Up to that point, no reporters or congressional investigators had talked to Huang at length, let alone under oath. Suddenly journalists were camping out in front of Klayman's office, hoping for a glimpse of the famous fund-raiser. "You should have seen Klayman strutting around," said a reporter at the scene. "He was always ready to give you the quote you needed. He longed for the spotlight."

The deposition didn't actually produce much in the way of evidence, but it did generate recognition for Klayman. For months Klayman's faxed press releases had been the butt of newsroom humor. Now, Judicial Watch was on network television and in all the major papers. Klayman landed a regular gig at NET, and soon he had his adoring flock of fans—not to mention a steady stream of donations to his organization.

Klayman can certainly be telegenic: he has a unique ability not only to make sense of the campaign finance scandal, but also to make it interesting. Thanks to his layman's explanations, NET viewers are probably better informed about the hearings than those who watch the Fox News Channel or C-SPAN, the only other networks broadcasting the hearings.

Klayman also has an uncanny ability to appear ultra-reasonable—which is quite a feat, since he creates precisely the opposite impression once you get him going in one-on-one conversation. For instance, on my way to lunch with him, we discussed a restaurant operated by the National Park Service. He recommended it, only to mutter in the next breath that the park service is better at cooking fish than, say, investigating murders. (Sensing my puzzlement, he assured me that Vince Foster's death itself was not one of *his* interests—Klayman says he only cares about what happened afterwards.) Later, Klayman outlined his five-part plan for reforming the judiciary. Among his ideas: eliminating life tenure for judges and psychological testing since, he says, many judges are not "balanced."

Judges don't have such nice things to say about Klayman, either. On more than one occasion, judges have sanctioned him for inappropriate behavior. "You know how most Republicans are always talking about judicial reform?" asks a patent lawyer who has watched Klayman for years. "They could do wonders just by cutting out Klayman's part of the docket. It would cut down on volume and unsubstantiated cases."

It was, in fact, a 1992 confrontation with a federal judge in Los Angeles that led Klayman to create Judicial Watch. In the patent case, which was well reported by *National Journal*, Klayman was representing a Taiwanese manufacturer of bathroom accessories. The presiding judge, William Keller, said Klayman had engaged in a "pattern of misconduct" including "making further argumentation when he had been ordered by the court to cease speaking" and refusing to answer the court's questions. Judge Keller, who was a Reagan appointee, then barred Klayman from ever returning to his courtroom and ordered his firm to pay more than $20,000 in legal expenses to the plaintiff. In an apparent attempt to warn future judges about Klayman's history, Keller also ordered Klayman to attach his ruling to any future cases in California's Central District.

Klayman, who is Jewish, insists that Keller had a conflict of interest in the case and made anti-Semitic remarks; he also says Keller distrusted his client because he was Asian. Klayman provided TNR with two sworn statements agreeing that Keller acted discriminatorily. But an appellate panel dismissed Klayman's charges of racism. The panel said Klayman has "taken considerable liberties with the record and mischaracterized statements therein.... "

There are other episodes: Three years ago, the chief judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade ordered Klayman to pay $1,500 for "frivolous filings" that "wasted time and resources of the defendant" and of the court. Klayman says the sanction stems from a mistake that wasn't his fault, but an associate's. It's quite a history—although Grace Phillips really doesn't want to hear about it. "You can say what you want," she says over the sound of Thompson's voice. "But he's—what's the right word for this generation? Oh yeah, groovy." •

Bureacratic decay at State.

UNPLANNED

By Susan Ellingwood

This summer, a 52-year-old Washington, D.C., attorney named Gregory Craig became the nineteenth director of the 50-year-old Policy Planning office at the State Department. Of all the jobs in American foreign policy, few have been held by such a long line of distinguished intellectuals and foreign policy dons. This is, after all, the bureaucratic niche where, in small, smoky meetings, the Kennans and Nitzes huddled about nuclear deterrence, Soviet containment and the Marshall Plan. And Craig's pedigree? A former foreign policy aide to Senator Edward Kennedy and a partner at Williams & Connolly, he is well-known for defending infamous members of the Senator's clan—most recently his nephew, William Kennedy Smith, on charges of assault and battery at a Virginia bar. (The case was settled.)

Perhaps, though, Craig's credentials are a good fit for the State Department's increasingly marginalized Policy Planning staff, known to insiders as "S/P." Stripped of

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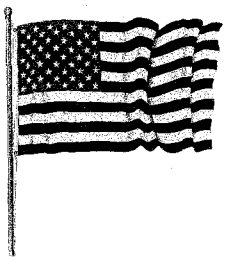

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its clout as State's in-house thinktank, under the Clinton administration Policy Planning has become little more than a public relations shop, a weak appendage of the secretary's office.

How did this happen? The original Policy Planning staff was the brainchild of Secretary of State George Marshall. Following World War II, Marshall believed that the State Department needed an office within the organization that would take responsibility for examining foreign policy as a whole, uniting the ideas and concerns of the disparate bureaus within the building. Marshall's concept was intended to counter the supposed Soviet tendency toward long-term planning.

Historically, the performance of Policy Planning has always hinged on its director's relationship with the secretary. In 1947, Marshall appointed the Soviet expert, George F. Kennan, as its first director. Kennan had Marshall's ear, and the result was the Marshall Plan, a landmark foreign policy achievement that bore the unmistakable imprint of Policy Planning's forward thinking. Conversely, when Dean Acheson took over as secretary of state in 1949, Kennan fell out of favor, and Policy Planning lost its influence.

The list of some of Kennan's successors reads like a roll call from the Council on Foreign Relations: Paul H. Nitze, Robert Bowie, Winston Lord, Anthony Lake, Peter W. Rodman and Dennis Ross. With the support and indulgence of their respective secretaries of state, each of these men was able to turn the very amorphousness of Policy Planning's mission to his advantage. Ross, for example, made himself the indispensable envoy to the Middle East on behalf of Secretary James Baker and President George Bush, a position he's continued to hold through the Clinton years.

Craig's immediate predecessor was James Steinberg, another former foreign policy aide to Senator Kennedy who also had a close personal relationship with his boss, Warren Christopher. But under Steinberg, S/P's bureaucratic decline accelerated. His staff consisted of smart people keeping track of the issues—but that is exactly what hundreds of other smart people throughout the building were already doing. Steinberg often simply did his boss's bidding, which had little to do with critical long-range planning. According to one source, in an off-the-record speech delivered at State early in his tenure, Christopher observed that he did not see himself as a strategist, but rather as a problem solver. Samuel Lewis, a former career foreign service officer who served briefly as Christopher's first director of Policy Planning, says that Christopher "talked about preventive diplomacy ... but the intellectual problem of thinking it through and discussing the issues ... wasn't something he was invested in or cared about."

But Christopher wasn't the only one to blame for Policy Planning's demise. Steinberg's own conception of the job of director was skewed. While he had steeped himself in the glorious history of Policy Planning, he considered building public support for foreign policy to be his principal responsibility. As Steinberg puts it, his job was "to get the public and Congress to understand what you are trying to do ... we played a large role in the articulation of policy, in the speechwriting process [and] in the secretary's testimony." For Steinberg, communications was often an end in itself.

There were, of course, other factors behind Policy Planning's marginalization. Under Christopher, several key functions, including speechwriting, were surrendered, at least partially, to other offices. Perhaps most damaging, in an effort to impose tighter budgetary discipline on the department, Christopher removed S/P from the process of planning State Department spending. This left the office with little real power in shaping priorities.

And without a central unifying authority, there were soon myriad offices doing the same thing. For instance, Craig Johnstone, the head of the new Resources, Plans and Policy office (S/RPP), skillfully appropriated many of the budgetary duties of the director of Policy Planning. As if to symbolize Johnstone's new authority, a photograph of the former foreign service officer and businessman went up on the walls of the department's first floor hallway, along with all the assistant secretaries and the director of Policy Planning. Today, State Department officials say that you know it's a serious meeting when someone from S/RPP is in attendance. S/RPP's recent document, *International Affairs Function 150: Budget Request and Objectives*, outlines six major foreign policy objectives for fiscal year 1998. It looks an awful lot like what Policy Planning used to do.

Does any of this really matter? Or is it just another typical story of bureaucratic sclerosis? Most foreign policy experts believe it does matter. According to John Stremlau, a former member of the Policy Planning staff under both Ross and Lewis, and now an adviser at the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Policy Planning remains an essential function: unlike S/RPP, he argues, it can act as mediator among conflicting bureaus like trade, environment and human rights, and provide what is so often lacking in foreign policy—forethought.

But whatever its merits, one thing is indisputable: Policy Planning at the State Department is effectively dead. While Craig is firmly ensconced in the office, it is not at all clear that the new secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, knows what to do with him, or much cares. For all her toughness and talent, she relies extensively on an inner circle of advisers and seems to be mainly concerned with building public support for foreign policy. As a result, she is likely to continue Christopher's practice of using Policy Planning as a frail arm of the communications shop.

Craig, a tenacious defense lawyer, may still defend his territory—and make his staff relevant in the building once again. But in an administration where foreign policy has been largely a matter of distributing press releases, making speeches and serving up soundbites on television, it won't be easy. Of course, he can always go back to defending the Kennedys. •

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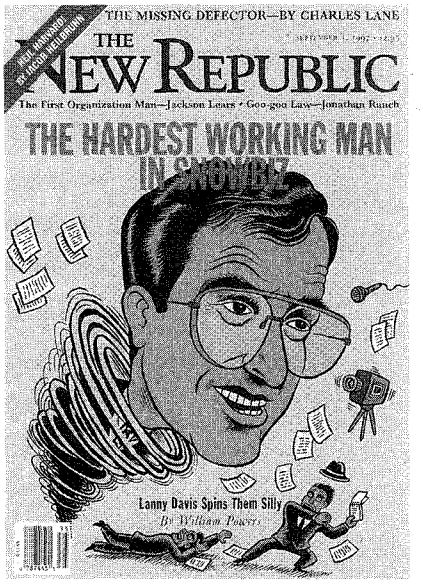
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The prophets of biblical investing.

MORAL CAPITAL

By Jacob Heilbrunn

Arthur Ally is upset because he can't bring himself to buy Cheerios anymore. "I love Cheerios," says Ally, an investment adviser, "but I haven't eaten them in ten years! I'd sure like to start eating them again." Tom Strobhar, president of Pro Vita investment advisers, has also decided reluctantly to ban the General Mills product from his kitchen. "My daughter would prefer Cheerios over the house brand," he says, "but in the long run, it's good for her. You give up something for a bigger idea." And not only do Ally and Strobhar refuse to eat General Mills's products, they also refuse to touch the company's stock.

General Mills has contributed thousands of dollars to Planned Parenthood. And Planned Parenthood, of course, is anathema to social conservatives. So just as liberals created "socially responsible" mutual funds in the 1960s, conservatives are now establishing their own vehicles for ideologically pure investing. "I've tried to bring some of the tactics of the liberals to the conservative side," says Strobhar. "At American Express people are hammering on the environment for the ten zillionth time. Why not bring up abortion and other issues?" Instead of targeting South Africa and corporate polluters, religious conservatives are taking on abortion clinics, raunchy television shows and companies that offer health insurance to their employees' gay partners. These groups' economic bible isn't *The Wealth of Nations*; it's the Bible. "We're not interested in secular thinking," says attorney William Van Alen Jr., the president of the NOAH FUND.

Started in May 1996 with a limited portfolio, the NOAH FUND (fully capitalized as a matter of company policy) offers investors a mutual fund carefully designed to exclude companies dealing in pornography, abortion, alcohol, gambling and tobacco. Also, 10 percent of NOAH's annual 1 percent management fee is donated to "missions, discipleship, and the poor." Despite all the restrictions on where it can invest, the fund has managed to keep pace with the booming stock market; it had a return of over 20 percent last year. The fund's slogan: "As Noah with the animals two by two saved for the future, you can too."

The answering machine at Arthur Ally's Timothy Plan tells callers, "God can't be denied." Established in 1994, the fund has $19 million in assets and a minimum investment of $1,000. Ally, its president, spent eight years as a broker at Shearson Lehman Brothers. He decided to create a fund based on the biblical principles set out in the apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Like NOAH, the Timothy Plan offers investors a mutual fund purged of Walt Disney and of medical manufacturers that make products used in abortions. But Timothy draws an even harder moral line than NOAH does. It also eschews investments in companies that offer health benefits to same-sex or unmarried couples, and goes on to avoid companies that provide contributions to Planned Parenthood. The extra dose of family values may not necessarily help the Timothy Plan's bottom line. Timothy has posted a three-year return of 24 percent, far below *Mutual Funds* magazine's Growth Fund Index's 61 percent. Liberal investment funds have traditionally faced the same problems of profitability.

Still, Ally remains a true believer, and he is not alone. In May, the Catholic Values Investment Trust opened its doors to investors; it has already attracted $4 million. Americans, Ally says, "are waking up to the fact that corporate America is contributing to the pollution of our culture and that we need to hold them accountable."

The problem is whom to hold accountable. Timothy bans any investment in companies that deal with Planned Parenthood, while NOAH does not. "We screen out and draw the line between companies that are passively unrighteous and those that are pursuing an unholy agenda," Ally explains. So far, the damned include American Express, which Ally says supports Planned Parenthood; Columbia/HCA, a hospital chain whose affiliates, Ally says, "[do] abortions for profit"; and Time Warner, which Bob Dole denounced in his presidential campaign for peddling gangsta rap.

Since choosing whom to ostracize can be difficult, another new industry has appeared to assist conservative Christian fund managers in identifying the proper culprits. Take the Seattle-based Institute for American Values Investing. Its founder, Scott Fehrenbacher, a former retail broker at E.F. Hutton, explains that in the 1980s, he decided to imitate the socially conscious tactics of the left. Since then, Fehrenbacher has started a conservative newsletter for $36 a year called *The Investigator*, which alerts subscribers to alleged liberal corporate perfidy. Its articles have titles such as "American Corporations Take Aim at Marriage" and "Why Mickey & Minnie Fail the Test." The test comes in the form of Windows-based software called the eValueator that Fehrenbacher sells for $400 a pop. The eValueator screens for four cultural sins: pornography, anti-family entertainment, abortion and the promotion of non-marriage lifestyles—namely, homosexuality or unmarried couples living together. If a company passes muster,

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a little green light blinks on your computer screen. But a red light flashes at the mention of some 200 other corporations, including Johnson & Johnson and AT&T.

Fehrenbacher has lots of company. Other screening enterprises include Pro Vita, run by Tom Strobhar, and Life Decisions International, directed by Patricia Pitkus Bainbridge. Strobhar has reviewed the holdings of everyone from the Knights of Columbus to the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptists, Strobhar declares, "own investments that seem incongruent with their stated moral goals."

It's not easy, though, to make the invisible hand move in a moral direction. And not everyone has adopted Strobhar's sweeping approach to corporate sinners. Bainbridge, for example, focuses solely on corporations that make contributions to Planned Parenthood. "The Gap, General Mills—you have people in power in these corporations who have embraced this agenda," she says. To pressure them, Bainbridge has created a corporate blacklist. The only way for a company to get off the list is to do penance. "To get off it," she says, "all a corporation has to do is go five years without supporting Planned Parenthood or send us a letter." According to Bainbridge, forty-nine corporations have changed their ways as a result of her pressure, but she won't name names, except for AT&T, which was publicly denounced by Planned Parenthood in major newspaper advertisements for ending its financial donations.

Bainbridge and her fellow crusaders may claim a few isolated victories such as AT&T. But they have also raised eyebrows among free-market conservatives. James K. Glassman, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, notes, "These funds do poorly. The reason they do poorly is the people who run them tend not to be of high caliber. They are in a business Wall Street considers kind of sissy." David Mason, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, says that "My impression is that it's a marketing gimmick. For a conservative Christian to say, 'I won't invest in *Playboy*,' is one thing, but to make it an ethical matter across the board is another." And Stephen Moore, an analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute, observes that the notion that niche funds can successfully compete with the giants is "snake oil."

But that hasn't deterred mainstream brokerage firms such as Prudential Securities from trying to get a piece of the action. "This is a real growing market, it's just phenomenal," says Suzanne Harvey, the head of Prudential's Social Investment Research Service. But since Prudential is in business purely for profit, it has the luxury of working both sides of the issues. Its research department can check if a company offers domestic partnership benefits to gay employees, and then pitch the stock to left-leaning investors, while steering conservatives away from it. "What's good for one client," says Harvey, "is absolutely abhorrent to another." •

John Sweeney, moderate militant.

HARD LABOR

By Jonathan Cohn

John Sweeney's name rarely appears in print without the word "militant" attached to it. Sweeney first gained national prominence in 1995, when, as president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), he led striking janitors in a sit-in that blocked morning rush-hour traffic on Washington, D.C.'s Fourteenth Street Bridge for two hours. Later that year, Sweeney burnished his reputation as a confrontationalist by running (and winning) an insurgent campaign in the first-ever contested election for the presidency of the AFL-CIO. Heavy-set and balding, Sweeney comes across like central casting's idea of a rough-and-tumble, 1950s labor boss. He "acts like Che Guevera the guerrilla leader," says Don Sweitzer, a Democratic political consultant with long-standing labor ties. "He is an old-fashioned, confrontational union organizer who is not afraid to use unpopular methods to get to the bottom line."

But in person, the militancy is hard to see. Sweeney is courteous and grandfatherly. Even when answering pointed questions, he speaks in muted, congenial tones. And it is this side that made him a viable union leader in the first place. For all of his rabble-rousing, he rose through the ranks over the last four decades because of his backstage talent for appeasing, co-opting and soothing would-be adversaries. Quietly calculating, he even helped keep the AFL-CIO's member unions together for such highly traditional (if highly unsuccessful) lobbying

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efforts as the one on behalf of President Clinton's health care plan. Indeed, when a group of eleven officials representing AFL-CIO member unions first began plotting to change the federation's leadership back in the mid-'90s, they picked Sweeney to lead the charge because he was the only one among them capable of healing the scars that such a divisive campaign would inevitably leave.

This, then, is the irony of John Sweeney's ascendance to the leadership of the House of Labor. He is a product of the moribund institution he has set out to reform. That Sweeney has come to power with a strong mandate to shake up labor is a measure of how desperate for change some of the AFL-CIO's member unions had become. That they turned to him is a measure both of how shallow the federation's pool of truly fresh, insurgent leadership was, and of how delicate the job of overcoming bad old union habits still is. Sweeney is labor's Mikhail Gorbachev: the man who rose through the ranks of a hidebound organization, accumulating allies and information along the way, until his chance to take over and do things differently finally came. But we all know how Gorbachev ended up. Caught between reactionaries and radicals, he managed to enact just enough perestroika to destabilize the Soviet Union forever. Of course, the Soviet Union wasn't worth saving. A free, democratic trade union movement is a pillar of American democracy, or should be.

So far, Sweeney's blend of militancy and moderation has served him well. In politics, he has struck an aggressive posture toward a Republican Congress that hates unions and a conciliatory one toward a Democratic president who tolerates them; within the federation, he has boldly pushed for more organizing and a more diverse movement, but not so boldly that he risks losing the support of labor's entrenched establishment. Sweeney inherited a labor movement so increasingly bereft of members that it was on the verge of extinction—the result of increasing globalization of the American economy, of hostility from the business community and of the movement's own lazy inertia. Now there is optimism and activity at all levels. Although unions actually lost 100,000 members in 1996, the decades-long decline in union membership seems finally to be bottoming out. At the AFL-CIO's biannual convention in Pittsburgh this week, hundreds of union delegates will render a positive verdict on Sweeney's first two years as they gather to re-elect him, unopposed, for another term as president.

But while Sweeney has earned that reward, the easy part of his job is now over. In 1995 virtually any activity at all from the federation leadership was bound to be an improvement. Now Sweeney must go from merely stopping decay to actually increasing labor's ranks significantly beyond the current levels—15 percent of the total workforce, and just 10 percent of the private-sector non-agricultural workforce. And he must do it by recruiting workers in the low-wage service sector, where there are proportionally more non-unionized laborers, but where organizing drives are historically the most difficult.

This would be a daunting task for any AFL-CIO president, and not merely because of relatively pro-company labor laws and resistance from corporate America. For the last quarter-century, labor's image among workers, and among the public at large, has been defined by stories about well-paid union members striking to get even more, corrupt union leaders skimming off pension funds and well-heeled union lobbyists cutting backroom deals in Washington. To survive and grow, labor must shed this image, even if it was not entirely deserved, and that will mean confronting both the movement's own institutionalist conservatives and the Democratic politicians who now take union support for granted. In short: labor needs the militant Sweeney.

The AFL-CIO's boxy headquarters building sits at 815 Sixteenth Street in Washington, no more than a hundred yards from Lafayette Park, and just a short stroll from the White House. Except for a church and a hotel, it is the building closest to the executive mansion's north face. Sweeney can glimpse the White House when he looks out a floor-to-ceiling window on the corner of his sixth floor office, and it's fair to assume that the current occupant of the White House has spent a good deal of time peering back.

The location is symbolic of the AFL-CIO's longstanding strategy of maintaining its share of the labor force by maintaining its quantum of power in Washington. And Sweeney's most talked-about preoccupation during the last two years has been the effort to inject some new life into that traditional national political strategy. Although the labor movement had always maintained strong ties to the Democratic Party, if only because it remained a significant source of the party's contributions, its influence over federal domestic policy had waned under the leadership of Lane Kirkland, whose real passion was for international crusades on behalf of workers in communist countries. Labor never quite recovered politically from its disastrous early endorsement of Walter Mondale's presidential candidacy in 1984. After that, lobbyists for the federation and individual unions were largely content to cut deals here and there, protecting union jobs one industry at a time.

Upon taking office, Sweeney made two key realizations: first, that focusing on such a narrow and defensive agenda would only confirm the public's suspicion that organized labor was just another Washington interest group; and, second, that in the 1990s the more effective way to influence politicians is not through campaign contributions but through independently financed television ads that shape voter attitudes. Sweeney united the movement's disparate elements, at both the local and national level, behind a new political platform—a call for higher living standards under the banner, "America Needs A Raise." Sweeney even put out a book (ghostwritten by former Clinton speechwriter

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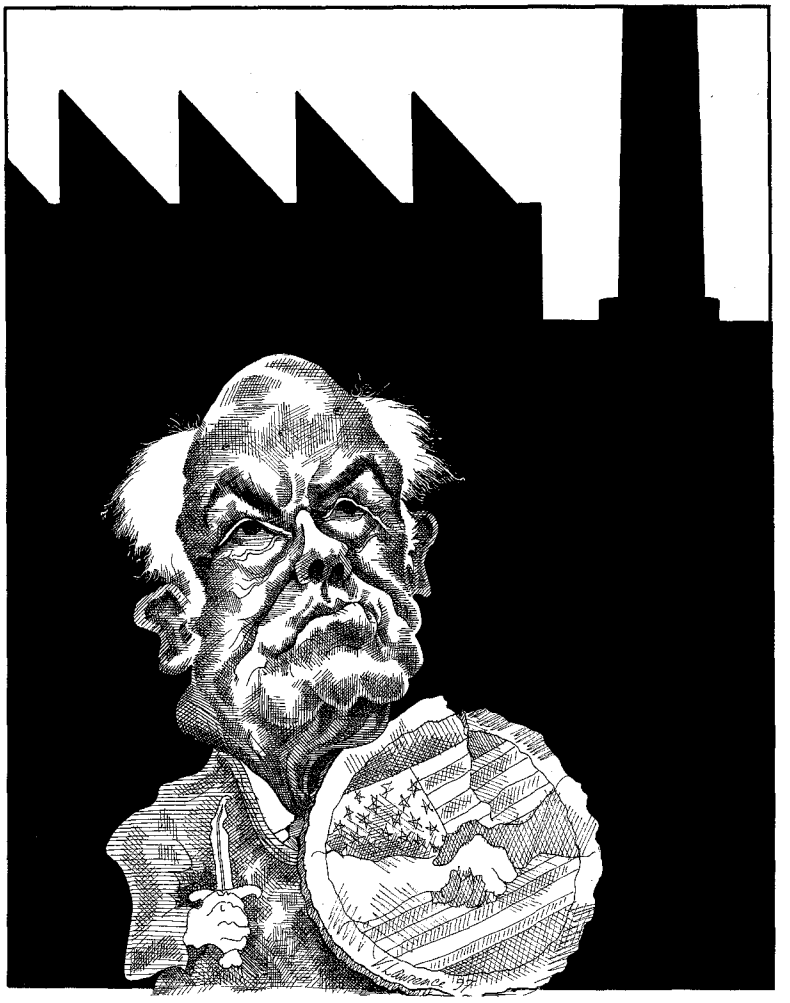
David Kusnet) under the same title. And in the spring of 1996, Sweeney rolled out his campaign on behalf of a cause most inside-the-Beltway pundits dismissed as hopeless: getting the Republican-controlled Congress to enact a higher federal minimum wage.

What made the minimum wage campaign so important was what it said about who the labor movement is, or, rather, who Sweeney wanted it to be. Though very few union members make the minimum wage themselves, the campaign did promise to benefit AFL-CIO workers, since a higher minimum wage would, at the margins, reduce employers' incentive to switch from union to non-union labor. But in taking up this cause, Sweeney shrewdly cast the unions' position not as a battle for their own betterment, but as a battle for society's have-nots, broadly defined.



JOHN SWEENEY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Also conspicuous about the minimum wage campaign was that it was led from the north side of Lafayette Park. Although the Clinton administration had long been on record as supporting the increase, it did not take the lead in promoting a higher minimum wage, probably because, like most of the Beltway establishment, it believed the issue was a nonstarter. Only after labor took to the grass-roots—or, more precisely, to the airwaves—did the administration start to move.

When the measure finally did pass, the labor victory seemed to herald the rise of a rejuvenated liberal force on the increasingly conservative American political scene. Certainly labor's influence worried pro-business institutions such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page. Since the minimum wage fight, however, the labor movement has become more defensive and more accommodating, at least in its relations with the White House. Sweeney has assumed the political posture of the Kirkland era, shoring up the moderate center (Clinton) to defeat the anti-union right (the GOP Congress). But this strategy failed Sweeney's predecessor because it never achieved such critical goals as labor law reform, and because it fostered the impression that unions were just another Washington lobby. "Sometimes it's good to be across from the White House and sometimes it's bad," says one senior union staffer. "You get a little too close."

Consider, for example, what happened to the "America Needs A Raise" campaign, which mysteriously disappeared from public prominence in the summer of 1996. The federation put the campaign on the back burner after the White House—then under the sway of consultant Dick Morris—made it clear that Bill Clinton was going to run against Bob Dole on the defensive theme of protecting education, Medicare and Social Security. There's no proof there was an explicit arrangement, but the logic seems transparent: because the Clinton camp deemed the focus on stagnant wages too politically volatile—it might have led voters to ask why the president himself hadn't delivered better pay for average workers—the labor movement abandoned the one political theme most closely tied to its fundamental mission of raising living standards. Instead, it pumped unprecedented amounts of money into the 1996 campaign—some $119 million, nearly all on behalf of congressional Democrats, according to one recent report by the Center for Responsive Politics. Much of it was spent on TV and radio ads spouting the administration's campaign line.

That spending, so conspicuously partisan, has become the subject of increasing scrutiny from both campaign finance investigations in Congress and the public at large. (This is a serious, though largely unfair, charge: labor is no more partisan than other nominally independent groups such as the Christian Coalition and the National Rifle Association, and business still outspends labor by seven-to-one.) More recently, even some activists within the labor movement have raised their eyebrows over the pas de deux between unions and the White House over the 1998 budget. As the administration edged closer to a budget deal that

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endorsed large tax breaks skewed toward the wealthy, many liberals went on the attack, urging a harder line from the White House—if not an outright veto.

Labor, however, played an inside game, focusing on fending off a Republican workfare proposal that seemed to threaten the jobs of unionized public employees. Sweeney and AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, who is personally close to both Clinton and Vice President Gore, lobbied the administration privately. When McEntee spoke out publicly, he did so by criticizing the administration's point man on welfare, Bruce Reed, and not the president himself. The administration went along, making it clear that it would not sign any budget that included the Republican workfare initiative; labor reciprocated by praising the budget deal and offering only tepid criticism.

It's true that labor is about to launch an aggressive campaign against the administration's request for fast-track negotiating authority on free trade agreements. But a full-court press was not a foregone conclusion—it took pressure from the industrial unions who suffer most directly from international competition. Originally, labor officials told me, Sweeney's close circle of advisers at the AFL-CIO worried that too rigid a stand against NAFTA expansion might jeopardize relations with the administration over what was probably a losing cause. (Sweeney denies this.) Sweeney and most of his advisers, who, like him, came up through the service industry and public sector unions, also tend to care about trade less than the industrial unions. (This is evidence of an emerging split that promises to grow in the 2000 presidential campaign, which will likely pit the administration's point man on trade, Vice President Al Gore, against its most vocal critic, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt.

Whatever the merits of the trade issue, though, the episode raises disturbing questions about who's really in charge of labor's agenda—leaving the impression among some people that the AFL-CIO is still just a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Democratic National Committee, as its critics have always said. Union officials themselves are starting to wonder what their political money is buying: Sweeney failed to dislodge a Republican Congress in 1996 and his political partner is a centrist president whose present preoccupation is an initiative anathema to much of the labor movement. "If you're part of the system and doing well, there's an argument for not rocking the boat," says one labor official. "But we're part of the system and we're not doing well. We have the image of the Washington interest groups and none of the benefits."

Of course, while Sweeney's political activity dominates the public discussion about unions, it is Sweeney's efforts to rebuild the movement internally—to refocus it on organizing new members, and to broaden its membership base to include more low-income workers—which will ultimately determine whether labor can resurrect itself. And Sweeney has done best in this area when he has played the role of labor agitator. Before Sweeney, the federation's organizing resources were folded into a larger department that was preoccupied with other tasks. Sweeney made organizing a separate department with an expanded budget, and tapped a young, aggressive organizer named Richard Bensinger to head it. The AFL-CIO still can't actually organize on its own—signing up new members is something individual unions do for themselves. But the federation can advise current organizers, train new ones and provide other forms of assistance, which, under Sweeney, is just what it's been doing.

Labor leaders used to write off organizing as virtually impossible under pro-employer U.S. labor laws. Their skepticism was well-founded: in most Canadian provinces, unions can represent employees as soon as a majority of workers sign cards affirming their desire to organize; in the U.S., once business contests an organizing drive, there must be an election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which can be a prelude to months—maybe years—of appeals and litigation even if the union wins fair and square.

Yet since labor law reform is not in the cards, at least not soon, Sweeney and Bensinger tell union leaders that they must learn to organize members without going through the NLRB. Specifically, they say, unions must bring pressure to bear on employers—through slick media campaigns, the manipulation of pension funds controlled by unions, peaceful trouble-making like picket lines and old-fashioned house calls to workers themselves. If the pressure gets intense enough, Sweeney and Bensinger say, then companies will come to see that recognizing unions is in their own best interest. And just to prove the point, Sweeney has put federation resources behind this effort, creating among other things a corporate affairs department whose entire purpose is to find out how to put pressure on companies that fight organizing drives.

Sweeney and Bensinger also preach proactive thinking about organizing—say, by having unions agree to forgo some wage increases in order to secure agreements from companies not to fight future organizing drives. In Las Vegas, the example federation officials seem most fond of citing, such tactics have allowed a local affiliate of HERE (the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union) to more than double its membership from 18,000 to over 40,000 in the last ten years—with 8,000 new members added last year alone.

And, yes, Sweeney still foments militant organizing campaigns. In July of this year, Sweeney led a rally in New York that blocked traffic on East Fifty-Sixth Street, in front of the midtown office building of Merrill Lynch. It was part of a campaign to pressure the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel company into giving striking workers a favorable settlement. Why protest in Manhattan? Because Merrill Lynch is a major shareholder in Wheeling-Pitt's parent company. The tactic seems to have worked: the workers got a favorable settlement. "We want to build bridges with employers first," Sweeney has said. "But if it requires blocking bridges, we will."

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To Sweeney's credit, such aggressive tactics and forward-thinking negotiating strategies are markedly different from organized labor's attitude in previous eras. Yet in attempting to spread his new ideas, Sweeney remains hamstrung by the inherent weakness of his job. Most of labor's power resides with the leaders of union locals and nationals, not with the president of the AFL-CIO. So far, Sweeney has relied on the power of his presidential bully pulpit to push his reforms. But that strategy may have reached the point of diminishing returns.

While Sweeney says unions need to devote 30 percent of their resources to organizing, and virtually every labor leader agrees publicly, *Business Week* reported earlier this year that unions only spend $200 million a year on organizing—or about 4 percent of their estimated annual revenue stream of $5 billion. Other estimates put the number closer to 10 percent. In any event, the labor leaders who spoke to me described the 30 percent figure as an ideal that may never be reached, mostly because union officials—particularly at the local level—still worry that taking money from services for dues-paying members will merely destroy labor's remaining base. "Everyone will say, yes, we're in a big crisis," says an official at one of the major industrial unions. "The rubber hits the road when you have to take political risks, when you need to divert more money to organizing and less money for servicing, because now maybe people will vote me out of office."

At the national level, Sweeney has found some creative ways to extend his influence over affiliates. For example, Sweeney has instigated union mergers, such as the pending merger of the autoworkers, the steelworkers and the machinists—three unions that have been decimated in recent decades by industrial downsizing. These mergers promise to enhance union bargaining leverage against global manufacturing behemoths, and they prevent struggling unions from fighting with one another for new members.

But, of course, not everybody wins when unions merge. High officials lose power and prestige. And the resistance to Sweeney's campaign is already mounting. At the AFL-CIO executive council meeting in Chicago this August, Sweeney proposed a constitutional amendment that would have shifted some influence over mergers from union presidents to Sweeney and the federation. According to sources familiar with the meeting, representatives from a handful of unions balked. "The federation can't make that happen, because it is a federation," says McEntee. "It has to come from the unions themselves, wanting to do that, wanting to put aside a couple of the admirals' hats and chiefs' hats, and some of the old history ... I don't know if it can happen."

Sweeney has backed away from the proposed amendment, and will presumably fight for it another day. Those who know Sweeney well say this is the way he usually handles contentious issues: push until somebody squawks, then pull back. "It's a very sensitive area," Sweeney confesses. "It requires a lot of tender loving care." Or does it? "While Sweeney brings a sense of energy and revitalization that was not there before, candidly I think you have to wonder whether there's enough of a sense of crisis," says a high-ranking official at one of the federation's largest unions. "I wish he were willing to say inside the house of labor that, fellas, we are near the point of becoming irrelevant. We've got to recognize that if we don't take more significant risks we risk literally falling off the face of the earth."

Sweeney's strategy of bending but not breaking labor's establishment could work if the organizing initiatives panned out quickly enough. But organizing is a slow process: Sweeney told me he hopes for modest goals of 2 to 3 percent growth a year, but even that figure is questionable. As the business community becomes more aware of labor's power, it will fight harder, which will mean more elections through the clunky NLRB process, where unions continue to fare poorly. "What's different is that there's now a sense that labor is going to put up a strong fight," Harley Shaiken, a professor at the University of California-Berkeley who is a union supporter, told *The Washington Post.* "There's no certainty that labor is going to win."

If the organizing bogs down, as seems likely, institutional conservatives will doubtless make a power play of their own. Already, there are rumblings from them about the high-minded crowd of upstarts Sweeney brought into the federation's operation. The activists, many of whom are products of left-wing political activity in the 1960s and 1970s, talk about solidarity, building bridges to liberal interest groups and developing a broad movement for the "oppressed." But this rhetoric alienates the union establishment, fostering suspicion about Sweeney's plans.

Perhaps nothing exemplifies this tension better than the federation's slick new magazine, *America@work.* Before Sweeney, labor's house organ was the *AFL-CIO News,* which was every bit the staid, gray, newspaper-style publication the name implies. *America@work,* in contrast, clearly reflects the mindset of the twentysomething and thirtysomething workers whom Sweeney is targeting for union membership. It has big, glossy pages, big full-color graphics and big words (or at least words in big type). A typical story in *America@work* is about young people, women or minorities. "When working people join together and reach beyond the barriers of color and culture, they can shake and remake the world," one article quoted Sweeney as saying. "We will build a movement so strong, so inclusive, so energetic that we will raise the wages, lift the spirits, and strengthen the solidarity of every working man and woman."

This pitch doesn't exactly resonate in the powerful, male-dominated industrial and building trade unions. "There was a recent issue of *America@work* that had a review of a Spike Lee movie," says one longtime union insider who worries about Sweeney's approach. "Can you

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imagine going out to a worker in Omaha, showing him this and convincing him that labor is something that represents his interests?" But labor desperately needs the African Americans, Latinos and women who predominate in the service economy, where the organizing potential is highest because companies can't pick up and move their operations overseas. And labor needs these groups represented at higher levels in union leadership. (Blacks and Latinos already outnumber whites in the labor movement, and nearly half of all unionized workers are female, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.) Thus, while Sweeney might be well-advised to refine his message so that it doesn't alienate older union members whose ill will could torpedo Sweeney's presidency, to abandon it altogether would forfeit the support of the younger, more diverse work force he wants to organize.

Sweeney has made a point of marching with the downtrodden, with an emphasis on the most mediagenic laborers with the most sympathetic grievances—strawberry pickers in California, part-time workers at UPS and so on. Unfortunately, Sweeney's own physical appearance often undermines his effort at image enhancement. Those who know Sweeney seem dumbfounded by the suggestion he might not be an appealing spokesman, probably because he makes such a good impression in person. But on television, Sweeney's gentle, genial speaking style comes across as a monotone. And in print photographs, where there is no voice and no moving gestures to give a reader context, cameras frequently capture Sweeney with eyebrows sharply arched over smallish, drooping eyes, making him look something like a James Bond villain. The AFL-CIO once commissioned a poll of reporters, asking them to assess which labor leaders make the most favorable public impression. Although Sweeney finished ahead of Kirkland, who was legendary for his disdain of the press, he polled behind AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Linda Chavez-Thompson and several union presidents, including the Teamsters' Ron Carey and the Service Employees International Union's Andrew Stern.

Far more important than physical appearance, though, is Sweeney's apparent unwillingness to confront the demons of labor's past—even the demons that are the products more of anti-labor mythmaking than actual historical reality. Despite the outpouring of support for the Teamsters in their strike against UPS, most polls show that a majority of non-unionized Americans would not be interested in joining a union. This is an old story in the United States, where a strong strain of individualism fosters skepticism about collective labor action. But the low poll numbers also reflect a sense, handed down by generation, that unions are corrupt and don't really serve the interests of workers.

In the Teamsters strike, UPS got caught flat-footed by the Teamsters' rapid-response public relations machine. That won't likely happen again: business lobbies and conservatives are already mobilizing around the issues of union corruption and union violence. The National Right to Work Committee, an anti-union group, recently staged a rally in Washington, D.C., to decry union violence; *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page is raising the issue as well. Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah sponsored a bill this summer to invalidate a court ruling that exempts union officials from a narrow class of federal extortion laws. Although union violence is mostly a bogus issue—and although the extent of corruption is greatly exaggerated—these perceptions will define public opinion if Sweeney does not respond. Unfortunately, Sweeney won't even deign to address the issues. When I asked him about union corruption, he countered, "What about corrupt business?"

Alas, Sweeney's own history of taking on entrenched leaders is spotty. Sweeney's most notable brush with an old-style union official came during the early 1990s, while he was still the president of SEIU. The Association for Union Democracy, a pro-union watchdog group, says it had fielded hundreds of complaints against Gus Bevona, the president of New York's largest local, 32B-32J, and reputedly the highest-paid labor official in the country. Local 32B-32J just happens to be Sweeney's old union. Yet despite Bevona's notoriety and the fact that he seemed to exemplify much of what Sweeney now says is wrong with the labor movement, Sweeney continued to sit on the local's board while he was president of SEIU and to draw a salary, as Jeffrey Goldberg reported in *New York* magazine. Later, a federal court slapped the local with a $100,000 penalty after the union hired a private investigator to trail a dissident member. Goldberg also reported that records showed Sweeney, as a member of the board, approved the investigator's hiring. Sweeney was unavailable for comment on this matter; in the past he has defended his extended involvement with 32B-32J, saying, "I work for that salary ... and I'm heavily involved in the activities of that local."

It is telling that officials at the association give Sweeney high marks anyway: merely by reasserting labor's political and organizational presence, they say, Sweeney has restored some faith among the rank-and-file. And once Sweeney became AFL-CIO president, he pointedly did not endorse Bevona's candidacy for the vacant SEIU presidency. The likely explanation for Sweeney's passive role in the Bevona matter is union politics. Since 32B-32J was New York's largest local, and Bevona had many allies, this was probably a fight Sweeney just couldn't afford to take on at the time.

If so, it wasn't the first time Sweeney made such a calculation. But now, in matters of politics both external and internal, he can ill afford to be so cautious. It is a credit to John Sweeney's leadership that the terms of debate have shifted so markedly in the last two years—that we can now ask not whether unions will die, but what exactly they will become. The best way for Sweeney to ensure that unions once again become a powerful voice for America's workers is to remain true to his public, militant persona. For a real reformer, the middle of the road is no place to take a stand. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

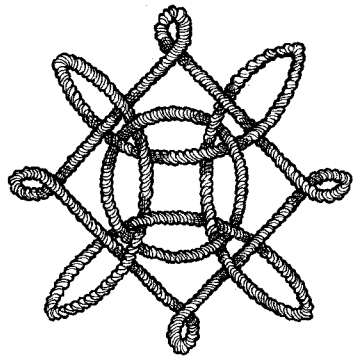
Old school

Can anyone imagine a situation in which the schools were run tightly by local education bureaucracies, and everyone was happy with them? Or a situation in which neither mayors nor governors, and certainly not presidents, had anything to say about the state of American schools because everyone thought they were just fine? In which education really was beyond politics, in which there was no school choice and no one demanded it? In which schools were never being reorganized or reinvented or reconstituted because everyone thought they were great just the way they were? Inconceivable, we would all agree. And yet the situation I describe was just the situation that prevailed in major American cities until about the 1950s. Admittedly, that was a long time ago. But it is not too long ago for many of us to remember it. Which raises a question: What has gone wrong?

Over the past thirty years, a dizzying sequence of reform movements—each with its own language and promises—have hit American schools. Typically one reform is scarcely implemented in part of a school system—often to wide acclaim—before it is abandoned in favor of another. The problem, everyone agrees, begins with the system for governing big city schools: the American norm of local control has transmuted into huge school bureaucracies, which seem to escape not only parental control but control of mayors and governors. The schools in the suburbs and small towns may not be very good but on the whole their patrons are satisfied, and whatever the inadequacy of lay control, they prefer it to greater state or federal authority.

American big cities, in contrast, are permanently discontented with their school superintendents, and the superintendents' careers tend to be short and nasty. Once, it seemed like more community control would save large metropolitan school systems. It was hoped that under this form of organization, borrowed from suburbs and small cities, big-city parents would be just as content with their schools as parents elsewhere. But nowhere did community control significantly reduce the power of central school bureaucracies. Now it has fallen out of favor—thanks to scandals and ineffectiveness—and strong mayors in many cities are trying to exercise greater direct control over school systems.

We have even seen a movement toward presidential leadership in education. Presidents Bush and Clinton each wanted to be known as "the education president," and they undertook major initiatives to improve schools in their time. But the effort to launch grand reforms from the top of the federal government is collapsing in confusion. Even voluntary national tests would be going too far for Congress, for many school authorities and for a significant body of suspicious public opinion. Many people would like to escape any central control or guidance, whether from school authorities, mayors or presidents, and establish their own schools with public funds. This explains the surprisingly popular "charter school" movement, which permits groups of parents and teachers to establish the kind of schools they want, freer of state and school district controls than public schools. In states that permit such enterprises, parents have established hundreds of such schools. It also explains why increasing numbers of parents are eschewing organized education altogether to provide home schooling for their children.



In a recent issue of *The New York Times Magazine*, education writer Sara Mosle profiled the new New York City school chancellor, who seems to be getting along well with Mayor Giuliani and who may last longer in the post than his predecessors of the last decade or so. It's been a while since that happened, and I decided to check on the first sixty years of the New York City schools, to see if it was ever thus. Sure enough, between 1898 and 1958 there were about six school superintendents. Often the school boards elected them unanimously, and they usually served in office until retirement or death.

The schools and their superintendents simply didn't seem to be subjects of politics. The school superintendents during the long tenure of Mayor LaGuardia in the 1930s and 1940s aren't even in the index of Thomas Kessner's big biography of LaGuardia. That energetic mayor may not have been satisfied with much in New York but he seemed quite content to let the professionals run the schools.

And why not? Those were the days when New York City schools were a model for the world. It was taken for granted that the big-city schools were the nation's best. After all, they had the resources, the buildings and the teachers. And yet the cities then, as now, were home to the poor and the uneducated, to immigrants and their children. Like many others, I am now a strong advocate of public school choice. I support parental choice of schools within the public school system and choice of schools outside the public system, since research shows they do much better than public schools in teaching the rudiments to children, particularly those from poor and working-class families. My own education was in a system without choice, run by a rigid and unchallenged school bureaucracy—yet I, like most in my generation, managed to get an education. And a perfectly adequate education at that.

Why did education work in a bureaucratic system without choice? Why do such systems still work in countries like Japan or France or Singapore or many other places? The effectiveness of these educational systems poses a real theoretical problem for those of us who are convinced that more choice is essential in American education—that the private school model, in which each school stands by itself, attracting parents because of its style of education and its school atmosphere, is the best model for our public schools.

But something happened in America. The crucial decade turns out to be, surprise, the 1960s. The storms around segregation brought down many a successful and admired big-city school superintendent. Schools could no longer be insulated from politics; one is simply amazed that they ever were. Other things changed, too. Families are now different, and perhaps that meant the schools had to become different. The norm then was that families had both fathers and mothers, and mothers generally stayed at home. There were no lunchrooms in elementary and junior high schools then—everyone went home for lunch, or brought sandwiches. Even in high school, almost no one *bought* lunch. Who could afford it?

It was a world where hardly anyone ever challenged school authority. The self-confidence of administrators and teachers was accordingly high. There were other important changes and differences, but we should not forget that big-city schools once achieved remarkable educational results for the children of the poor. It is worth pondering how that was done, and whether it gives us any ideas for what has to be done today.

NATHAN GLAZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Cinema Scope

A couple of American independent films had a curious effect: they sent me to see **Lawrence of Arabia** again. (David Lean's film has just been rereleased by Columbia in a new print). Admittedly, it doesn't take a lot to get me to *Lawrence* again on a big screen, but those two new films left me craving sheer voluptuousness.

Lawrence is even more clearly what it was than when I saw it last, in 1989. Every fine element in it shines more brilliantly—the acting, the dialogue, the editing, the cinematography—and the film's flaws are thus even more regrettable. Maurice Jarre's score relies much too confidently on the one familiar theme, broad and much more Opéra Comique than Arabic. The structure of Part Two, after the capture of Aqaba, is a series of adventures instead of a cumulative line. Images get repeated (desert attacks, train explosions), Lawrence's declarations of his ordinariness and its opposite slip from complexity into muddle.

We're left at the end with the feeling that Part Two of this 222-minute film, despite occasional inventive bursts, is the price that Lean and his colleagues had to pay in order to make Part One. That first part is crammed with excitements of every kind (in my fourth viewing), adventures in color and composition, in the unfurling of vastness—a plunge into primal simplicities at the start of the onrushing twentieth century. But the story had in some measure or manner to be finished off, so we journey through Part Two in the same gifted hands but with less sense of artistic adventure.

Still, what rewards. I know of no film, excepting some of John Ford's westerns, that so successfully integrates its physicality with its drama. And I saw once again why *Lawrence* seems more spacious than all the dozens of cleverly made epics in outer space. There is no space in outer space—for human beings. People in space are like submarine crews. The ocean is immense, but they are prisoners; the immensity of the sea is not a direct part of their experience. So, like astronauts, they float or slide past one another in their tubes. Not so in *Lawrence*. Lawrence luxuriates in the tremendous.

And some of the appeal of *Lawrence* is the exploit of making it. Those space epics are for the most part done in labs and studios. The story of the making of *Lawrence* in Jordan and Morocco and Spain is implicit in the film itself. (For fascinating details, see Kevin Brownlow's *David Lean*, reviewed here Oct. 14, 1996.) Obviously, physical and logistical difficulties don't guarantee a film's quality. Countless bloated and vapid pictures have been made under such difficulties; but they only seem a waste of time and money. With *Lawrence* we get the sensation—fanciful, but what of that?—that what we are seeing on screen is the success of a long struggle. Even at the close of the serpentine Part Two, we seem to share a sense of triumph with the film's makers.

The two American films that prompted the return to *Lawrence* were the **The Myth of Fingerprints** (Sony Pictures Classics) and **Going All the Way** (Gramercy). Both are first films, both are attempts at anti-Hollywood genuineness—that is, the basic reason for each film's existence is that it will try not to fit any Hollywood pattern.

Legend reports that in the 1930s there was a sign in the writers' building of a Hollywood studio: "It's not enough to be Hungarian. You must have talent." Today, for "Hungarian" we might substitute "iconoclastic." *The Myth of Fingerprints* was written and directed by Bart Freundlich, and a good deal of the directing suggests Hal Hartley spareness. But the warrant of the film's existence is the idea of a family reunion—at Thanksgiving time in New England—to let a family simmer together and reveal themselves.

This isn't exactly a new idea, as Freundlich surely knew; he must have counted, as do we, on the revelation of character to enrich the piece. It doesn't happen. None of the people is particularly interesting, not even the obligatory neurotic, well enough played by Julianne Moore. We just wait for each character to go through his or her requisite convolutions, like a series of interwoven vaudeville acts, and for the offbeat dialogue about minutiae as a signet of originality—for instance, a discussion at the dinner table of the qualities of mustard.

As the mother of the family, Blythe Danner gives a performance that deserves a better written character. As her husband, Roy Scheider is hollow, dull. The title presumably suggests that individuality is not fixed, but Freundlich's film doesn't convince about either ambiguity or metamorphosis. It simply plods along its well-worn, anti-conventional path.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

In the Company of Men. *Diamond-cut writing and directing by newcomer Neil LaBute. As cruelly as in a Restoration comedy, two young men play a trick on a young woman. Surprising results, of course. (Reviewed 9/1/97)* **Mrs. Brown.** *The widowed Queen Victoria and her Scottish groom John Brown. A true but near-incredible story, delightfully acted and presented. (8/4/97)* **My Mother's Courage.** *Michael Verhoeven directs George Tabori's script about the experiences of Tabori's mother in Nazi-occupied Hungary. Scary but, of all things, grimly humorous. Deftly done throughout. (9/29/97)* **A Self-Made Hero.** *Delicately bitter tale of a French impostor in World War II who made it to a happy ending. (9/22/97)* **—SK**

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Going All the Way is markedly worse. Dan Wakefield adapted his novel for the screen (I don't know the book), and the result is like a series of scenes scooped up by a bulldozer chugging through a junkyard full of clichés. Two young men return to Indianapolis from the Korean War and in their own ways try to re-enter—or enter—life. Ben Affleck, the only tolerable member of the cast, is lively and does his best to help his friend who is reclusive and withdrawn. Why Affleck should have been interested in this nerd and how that nerd could have remained so utterly nerdish after his wartime experiences, the picture doesn't explain. Nor do we care.

Both these films were ultimately somewhat depressing because they helped to italicize a schism in American filmmaking (allowing for exceptions). On one side, the multi-millioned behemoths; on the other, the cheese-paring small films. Not all the behemoths are dreadful—*Men in Black* is amusing. Not all the parsimonious ones are merely heroic against financial odds—*In the Company of Men* is compact but resonant. But suddenly I wanted to see something lush, intelligently lush.

Last summer at the Lincoln Center Festival in New York I saw a Romanian production of Aeschylus's *The Suppliants* which, most of the time, had more than 100 actors on stage. I wasn't much moved by the production, as it happens, but I lolled in its size. I kept relishing the scope of the enterprise, thinking that we're not going to get many chances in our theater, foreseeably, to see such lavishness, not even in musicals. (Which, again obviously, is not to say that small casts equal thinness. Not with Pinter and Mamet at hand.) It was something of the same hunger, in another art, that took me again to *Lawrence*. Remarkable that this sort of hunger now has a touch of nostalgia about it. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Mend It, Don't End It

The National Endowment for the Arts, under attack from friends and foes of the arts alike, is once again facing extinction. It has not received proper congressional authorization since 1993. Despite the untiring efforts of Representative Sidney Yates to preserve the Endowment's funding, the House recently decided (by a single vote) to remove it from the face of the earth, even disregarding a $10 million grant proposed by a subcommittee for the NEA's "orderly termination." And although a more sympathetic Senate may manage to prolong its life for a while, this poor enfeebled agency will at best receive little more in 1997 than the bare subsistence appropriated last year—a meager $99.5 million. Such a puny figure, distributed among a dwindling number of arts groups, levies 38 cents from each taxpayer, representing .01 percent of a $1.7 trillion national budget. It also represents a drastic reduction from a high in 1992 of $176 million—a low enough figure at the time when compared with the more munificent arts funding in Europe and Canada.

Yet this petty cash has become the subject of the most acrimonious debate and contumely in contemporary politics, some of it monopolizing entire issues of recent congressional records. The plight of the NEA has become synonomous with the plight of the American artist in our time—"villified, pilloried, misunderstood and neglected," in the words of NEA Chairwoman Jane Alexander. One is tempted to say the hell with it, let it go down, if only to end these endless boring disputes about the immorality of American artists and their nefarious efforts to pick the pockets of poor hard-working taxpayers.

Do I sound a little strung out? I am. I've written dozens of articles in the last thirty years arguing the importance of federal subsidies for the arts, and they haven't made a single dent in the political consciousness. If my case is at all typical, even those who have been among the NEA's most passionate defenders are feeling exhausted by the struggle. They are tired of being turned into arts advocates instead of working artists, tired of having to interrupt their creative labors in order to write, phone, fax and otherwise dun their political representatives, tired of being forced to make a case for the arts on the basis of economic indicators rather than measures of quality, tired of having to cite statistics instead of works of art.

What does it take to convince right-wing politicians, particularly the rabid Republican class of '94, of the need for government support of nonprofit arts? More time among their constituents, maybe. Most voters are already convinced. 76 percent of all Americans, according to another statistic, believe in some sort of federal arts subsidy.

Let's review (again) the arguments proposed for killing off the NEA. First, there is the issue of deficit reduction and a balanced budget. This one is really laughable considering the niggardly size of the NEA appropriation by comparison with the cost, to use Russell Baker's analogy, of the $2.4 billion Sea Wolf sub. New studies allege that the arts generate close to $17 billion in economic activity in America, support 1.3 million jobs, and produce $3.4 billion in income taxes for the federal government. (See how we're forced back into statistics?) The hypocrisy of the cost reduction dodge was exposed recently when Congressman Vernon Ehler (supported by Newt Gingrich) proposed an amendment to the Interior budget that offered to convert the NEA's entire appropriation into $80 million in block grants to the states. The amendment was defeated. As some of Ehler's Democratic colleagues on the aisle were quick to observe, block grants to the states are hardly going to save the government any money. They are simply a dodge to placate local arts proponents, while at the same time reintroducing content restrictions in another form. For the states are even more fearful of controversy than the NEA. Witness the local hysteria whenever *Angels in America* is produced.

This leads to the second accusation against the NEA, which is that it funds obscenity, a charge originally fomented by Jesse Helms. It is a vestige of the homophobic revulsion and sexual loathing that have dogged this country ever since our Puritan forbears, having closed up all the theaters in London, sailed to these shores to plant in our collective brains their obsession with the profaneness of art. The NEA's repeated defense against such charges is that only forty grants out of a hundred thousand have raised an outcry. Some find this tiny number of protested awards to be a sign of timidity rather than responsibility. I don't believe that the primary purpose of art is to offend, but any new art is bound to cause some controversy, and any mature civilization should be prepared to tolerate it. We're getting there, slowly. The federal courts have already ruled against Helms's effort to impose content restrictions on grant recipients, and the last round of NEA guidelines no longer included this demand. Short of a good spanking, the Supreme Court ought to force Helms to write the First Amendment on the

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blackboard a hundred times.

Third, there is the amusing charge that the NEA has never created any artists. Representative Sonny Bono of California actually rose in Congress during the recent debates to say that although "I have been in the arts" for thirty years, "I know of no one ... that has been assisted by the NEA." Perhaps too few American artists are spending enough time these days in Palm Springs cocktail lounges. If Bono thinks that his singing had something to do with the "arts," it's no wonder he wants to kill the NEA. I would, too.

Lyndon Johnson, or whoever wrote his speech, defined the purpose of the NEA in very precise terms: "While no government can call a great artist into existence, it is necessary for the federal government to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of expression but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent." This is an eloquent reply to those who regard federal support for the arts as just another form of entitlement. Quite the contrary: federal subsidy is a form of encouragement, not for the Sonny Bonos of this world, but for those artists who have chosen to avoid not work but the marketplace.

For reasons that are at least open to argument, individual artists are no longer being funded by the NEA. But many gifted people have benefitted indirectly through grants to cultural institutions, grants which have helped these institutions to multiply exponentially. To cite more statistics, before the NEA we had fifty-eight orchestras, thirty-seven professional dance companies, and fifty theaters in the country, with a combined audience of 1 million. Today we have 1,000 orchestras, 300 dance companies, and 400 theaters, with a commensurate rise in audiences to 55 million.

Be prepared to watch these numbers drop precipitously. Even before the massive cuts in NEA funding, many arts organizations were feeling the pinch. According to a recent story in *The Boston Globe*, "47 percent of the nation's opera companies reported deficits in 1994-95; 46 percent of professional regional theaters operated in the red in 1995-96; 29 percent of the nation's largest (and most visible) dance troupes carried a deficit this year; and 27 percent of all museums reported deficits in fiscal year 1995." Obviously, instead of stimulating gifts from private foundations and corporations, as conservatives envisioned at the time, the severe cuts in NEA funding have had the reverse effect of discouraging such gifts.

Fourth, there is the charge that NEA grants are unfairly distributed. Congressman Dick Armey scorned the idea that a "board of art censors in the East" would pretend to know better "what is or is not art suitable for the people of Iowa," while Representative Ehler expressed disdain that "one-fourth of all arts funding went to one State [New York]. That is hardly what one would call equitable funding." These are good examples of what I have elsewhere called "dumbocracy in America." Is it really necessary to remind our elected representatives that, unlike the right to vote, the capacity to create is not distributed equally among people or among states, that there is no equivalence between artistic talent and equitable geographical allowances? Apparently, it is. They continue to demand that the artist, like the politician, be subject to proportional representation (even though most Americans don't vote). But imagine the congressman from Sparta rising to complain, in 480 B.C., that all the arts and humanities money was going to Athens, even though Athens held an obvious monopoly on artists and philosophers and Spartans were too busy sticking foxes in their tunics to write a poem.

The major charge against the Endowment is that it is "elitist." The trouble is that everyone has a different idea of how to define this word. For paleocons such as Helms, it means control of the arts by a nefarious group of snobbish un-American homosexuals. For neocons such as Hilton Kramer, it means subversion of the arts by an irresponsible avant-garde. For racial and ethnic pressure groups, it means insufficient representation of blacks, Latinos, gays, women, Asians and other minorities. For those who have been turned down for grants, it means everyone else who received one.

I once wrote that "the word 'elitist' has now been manipulated to mean aristocratic or exclusionary when its etymology refers to leadership. Without an elite in the arts, we have no leaders, which is to say we have no vision, which is to say we have no arts." One is tempted to add that only in America could this word come to be used as an insult. Of course, we are perfectly willing to accept the idea of elite skills in most other professions. You wouldn't want a physician chosen by democratic procedures to operate on your gallstones any more than you would hire an estate planner because he or she satisfied existing ideas of cultural diversity. Yet artists and intellectuals in this country are being required to submit their credentials to an ideological process that might have been considered preposterous in countries that are much less democratic than our own.

Without the NEA, the arts will become truly elite in the sense that only the rich will be able to afford them. With NEA subsidies, small as they have been (grants generally represent from 1 percent to 5 percent of a group's annual budget), most performing arts institutions have been able to hold their prices well below the swelling costs of the marketplace. Nonprofit theater ticket prices, for example, amount to half or less of those in the commercial theater. As far as access is concerned, it is true that many of these institutions are not located in the inner city. But has no one ever heard of public transportation? The idea that the arts are elitist unless they bring the mountain to Mohammed is about as cogent as saying (and this has been said) that the Boston Museum of Fine Arts is racist because its walls are painted white.

Yes, this is the one area where the NEA is truly vulnerable to criticism: its suspension of artistic standards in order to satisfy multicultural fashions. It is sad to find Jane Alexander being forced to defend a grant to the California Indian Basket Weavers Association by saying "these baskets were used in pre-Columbian times, so tightly woven that they hauled water to the mesas from the valleys below." Are we no longer able to distinguish between arts and handicrafts? Between the work of artists and the tastes of audiences? Between the creative expression of inspired individuals and the identity politics of sects and groups?

The *locus classicus* of the NEA's weakness in this area was an article written last winter in *The Washington Post* by Jan Breslauer. Calling cultural diversity "the art world's version of affirmative action," she noted that 44 percent of NEA money this year was earmarked for minority groups, not counting the money being siphoned into mainstream institutions for multicultural programming. It is disheartening that the NEA's excellent panel process—where artists and institutions were once evaluated by a group of their peers—has now become an opportunity to display what President Clinton calls "the face of America." Obviously, this sort of rainbow representation can produce panelists of genuine discernment. It can also produce the implication that standards varied according to the racial and ethnic identity of each applicant. "The sad irony," Breslauer concluded, "is that the NEA has come instead to support the very separatism that Johnson denounced."

These are unfortunate developments for the NEA, but there is no reason to believe they will be lasting. American culture has always been subject to fashions of one kind or another—and, as my mother used to say, this too shall pass. The multicultural process, like the process of affirmative action, has accomplished some notable things. But they

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share certain excesses, which, when subjected to legal tests, may expose them as unconstitutional resorts to instant reform. Once this happens, creative people of all colors may again be able to recognize what unites them as artists rather than what divides them as sectarians. It is true that the NEA has been corrupted, but no more so than any other public agency. If something valuable is broken, then fix it. Don't junk it. Even a compromised and corrupted NEA is considerably more helpful than no NEA at all.

It is also likely that we wouldn't even notice these problems if there were enough money to go around. But the level of arts funding in this country is a scandal and a disgrace. Ultimately, federal funding for the arts will have no clout and arts policy no definition until President Clinton makes more of an effort to speak out strongly on their behalf. It's not enough to propose more money for the arts in a budget speech, or even to promise that any Interior bill that killed the NEA would be vetoed. He has to get behind the arts vocally and decisively.

Clearly, whatever his personal feelings and preferences, the arts don't interest Clinton on a political level because they are not a significant political force. But it is time for him to make a mark on history instead of on the polls; and the arts have traditionally been the measure by which a civilization is evaluated. In one of her columns in *Endowment News*, Jane Alexander reflected wistfully on a age when presidents hosted dinners for all the Nobel Prize winners at the White House. When Clinton wishes to honor the arts, he invites not Richard Wilbur or Robert Pinsky or Frank Bidart but his crony Miller Williams, an obscure poetaster from Arkansas, to write the Inaugural Poem.

Speaking of William Weld's controversial nomination to our embassy in Mexico, George Stephanopoulos recently said about his ex-boss: "I don't think [the President] can afford to continue to put up nominees and then leave the impression that he's not fighting for them." Clinton leaves exactly that impression regarding some of his other appointments, notably Jane Alexander of the NEA and Sheldon Hackney of the NEH. At a press conference called to announce his decision to resign from his current position, Hackney was asked what advice he might have for his successor. His reply was succinct: "Don't come." If the president continues to leave Jane Alexander without sufficient presidential ballast, he will probably receive another resignation letter pretty shortly—and nobody else will come. This event will doubtless be followed by a new round of statistics regarding the health of the arts in this country. And they won't be pretty. •

The Church of Appearances

BY ANDREW DELBANCO

Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham by Billy Graham

(HarperSanFrancisco, 759 pp., $28.50)

There is a striking moment in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* in which two main currents of American life converge. Skeptical Ben, a man who "seldom attended any public worship," and for whom "Revelation had indeed no weight," goes out one day in 1739 to hear a famous evangelical preacher whom he regards as a holdover from the age of credulity. The place is Philadelphia, the preacher is the visiting English Methodist George Whitefield, and the charity on Whitefield's mind that day is an orphanage in Georgia. Before the appeal, Franklin "did not disapprove of the design" for an orphans' home. Ever the booster of local interests, he "thought it would have been better to have built the House here & [to have] Brought the Children to it." By the time Whitefield finished his soaring plea, however, Franklin had "emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all." A wealthy friend, whose wariness of the preacher's blandishments had led him to attend the service without a cent on his person, found himself begging in the crowd for a loan with which he could make a gift of his own.

If Whitefield was the first great practitioner of itinerant revival preaching in America, Billy Graham is its modern master. His story begins fifty years ago, when Americans outside the South first came to know this dentally impeccable farmboy from North Carolina with a taste for Dr. Pepper and goofy suits, who traveled with a supporting cast of musicians, notably George Beverly Shea, the baritone who sings what Graham's biographer Marshall Frady aptly calls the "lanolin-lubricated solos" that are a standard part of a Graham service. In 1949, Billy and his Crusade Team (the initial letters are always capitalized) made their first incursion into the urban Northeast. Preaching on the Boston Common in a city full of theological liberals, Catholics and egghead unbelievers, he borrowed his topic from a sermon that Whitefield had preached there some two centuries before: "Shall God Reign in New England?" The result was a "harvest" of contributions and converts, and a sense among some in the infidel city that God's messenger had come to town. Even some latter-day skeptics, in the tradition of Franklin, were impressed.

Journey, Arrival, Doubt, Triumph: this is the four-part movement of Billy Graham's autobiography, which bears the belligerently modest title *Just As I Am*. It is a monotonous tale—how the ministry went national and then international, how it reached out through radio, film and (most of all) television—that makes for a book with a repetitive structure rather like the structure of pornography. Virtually every chapter tells the same story in the same vocabulary. Billy flies into town in a rickety chartered plane that is running low on fuel or in the hands of an unlicensed pilot or buffeted by a thunderstorm. At first, the press as well as local civic and religious leaders are dubious or hostile (Billy's handlers are always fretting that the plane is late or the weather bad), but the great man remains undaunted, the rally goes on, and it ends with a throng of converts approaching the sundrenched or moonlit platform to declare their "decisions for Christ."

Billy Graham probably deserves his reputation as having preached Christianity to more people than anyone in history. Pastor to presidents, inventor of (in Garry Wills's phrase) "golf course spirituality," author now of a bestselling memoir, he has been on the lists of most admired Americans for most of the last forty years. But who is this Elvis of the evangelicals? What does he believe? And what kind of religious experience does he offer his followers?

Just As I Am does not help much with these questions. Despite its length, it is not really a book. It is what Robert Giroux used to call an "ook": a gesture toward an idea or a sentiment or a story that is packaged as a book, but never quite becomes one. Considering how important strenuous self-reflection is in the religious tradition to which Graham belongs, one of its oddest features is how

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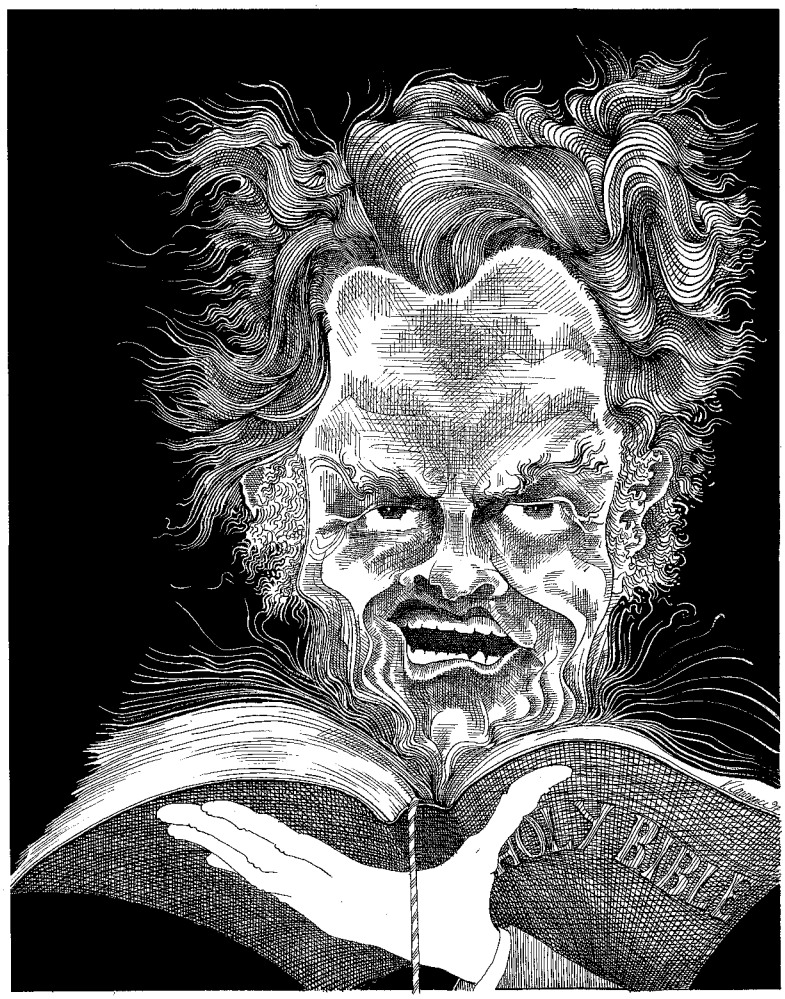
little it reveals of its author's inner life. We do catch glimpses of Billy in times of edginess and exhaustion; we learn that on tour he misses his wife and children; we witness a fleeting moment of doubt about the inerrancy of scripture. He expresses regret over a few public gaffes—such as when he and the Team, after a chilly visit with President Truman, knelt in posed prayer for photographers on the White House lawn. Put together with help from various writers, secretaries and "editorial coordinators," this memoir has the feeling of having been dictated on the run. There are flashes of self-deprecating humor, as when Billy looks back and discovers his youthful resemblance to Li'l Abner; but most of the humor is unwitting, as when we encounter "Bev" Shea at the Helsinki Crusade crooning "I'd Rather Have Jesus" in Finnish.

"To be honest," Graham says, "I never thought I would write this book ... [and] one of the hardest parts has been deciding what to leave out." It is not always easy to grasp just what has guided him in choosing what to put in. Skipping quickly over the war years (he was 23 when Pearl Harbor was bombed), he says little more than that his hopes for an army chaplaincy were thwarted when he turned out to be underweight. Yet certain small childhood incidents are carefully preserved for their allegorical value, as when the future preacher of love and reconciliation shuts up the family collie in the doghouse overnight with a cat—an experiment by which he learns, presumably, that creatures who go into a situation as enemies can come out friends.

Graham's first stirrings of conviction came when he was turning 16, in response to the voice and the gaze of a traveling preacher with the splendid name of Mordecai Ham, who had come to Charlotte to denounce sin. Dr. Ham seemed especially attuned to the dark secrets of the young, and Billy, whose participation in the local Presbyterian church had until then been merely dutiful, found himself feeling accused by the man's stare. "Billy was always a ladies man," as one friend (quoted not in *Just As I Am*, but in an admiring biography by William Martin) has put it. "He was quite a thinker, too. That's all he thought about." Surprising himself in feeling drawn to the revival meeting for a second night, he and his lifelong friend Grady Wilson decided to join the choir so they could mouth the words (neither could sing) while using their hymn books to hide from Ham's dread gaze.

Evidently, Graham came to his faith out of standard adolescent anxiety. "As a teenager, what I needed to know for certain was that I was right with God." *Just As I Am* does not elaborate on this quest for certainty, which concluded successfully when he was 16 and seems never to have faltered in the ensuing sixty-four years. It was a conversion of what William James called the "volitional type," a spiritual event without much sense of upheaval. "No bells went off inside me," Billy says. "No signs flashed across the tabernacle ceiling. No physical palpitations made me tremble." Now, nearly 80, he indulges in scant retrospective analysis of his adolescent self, but he does recall that after being smitten by Dr. Ham, he worried about ridicule from his peers. "How could I face school tomorrow? ... There seemed to be a song in my heart, but it was mixed with a kind of pounding fear as to what might happen when I got to class." There are hints that even before his conversion he may already have been regarded as over-scrupulous:

> Once in my senior year, when we were in a night rehearsal of a school play at Sharon High, one of the girls in the cast coaxed me aside into a dark classroom. She had a reputation for "making out" with the boys. Before I realized what was happening, she was begging me to make love to her. My hormones were as active as any other healthy young male's, and I had fantasized often enough about such a moment. But when it came, I silently cried to God for strength and darted from that classroom the way Joseph fled the bedroom of Potiphar's philandering wife in ancient Egypt.



BILLY GRAHAM BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

What Mordecai Ham gave to this boy was a new sense of the dignity of his scruples. To this was added the gift of a vocation: Billy would be a preacher. At Bible school and college, Graham discovered his own oratorical gifts and developed chaste friendships with several pious girls, eventually courting Ruth Bell, the daughter of missionaries, to whom he has now been married for more than fifty years. While studying to be a purveyor of the gospel, he spent some time hawking Fuller brushes door to door, an experience by which he tested and refined his salesman's knack. In 1940, at the New York World's Fair, Graham saw his first television. "They had a camera there, and as you walked by, you could see yourself on a screen. We never thought it would amount to anything, though. It seemed too incredible!" The rest is evangelical history.

For Americans outside the Bible belt that history can seem like a parade of buffoonish salesmen selling Jesus instead of snake oil. When Billy Graham was 10 years old, Sinclair Lewis captured the type and named him Elmer Gantry—

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a fictional figure to whom reality (lately in such exemplars as Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker) has often seemed to conform. In fact, however, American evangelicalism is as complex as any other loosely associated phenomena that historians choose to call a movement. It is inextricable from the founding and the development of the American nation (Melville referred to the United States as the "evangelical land"), which was settled by colonists who proclaimed their intention to evangelize the Indians. Today the very term evangelism seems synonymous with fundamentalism and political reaction, but it has encompassed many contradictory theological and political impulses.

Evangelicals such as John Leland and Isaac Backus were strong advocates of religious freedom during the constitutional debates of the 1780s, while others were appalled by the founding fathers' refusal to designate the early republic an officially Christian nation. Some evangelicals (such as Whitefield) were strict Calvinists, in the sense of stressing predestination and universal depravity, while others have insisted that human beings are perfectible and can choose salvation as an act of free will. Some evangelicals have been openly anti-Semitic (apparently including Mordecai Ham), while others fervently support Israel as the nation that will usher in the millennium. Evangelicals—often prominently including women—have played an important role in the causes of abolition, temperance, the Sunday School movement and urban charity and reform. Evangelicals have also been odious racists, xenophobes, and religious bigots. And though some evangelicals have been deeply suspicious of secular learning (an attitude that earned them a long section in Richard Hoftstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*), many of our most distinguished institutions of higher learning (Princeton, Dartmouth, Brown and Oberlin, among others) were founded by evangelical Christians.

Where is the common ground? For one thing, evangelicals of all creeds, styles and denominations have tended to set themselves against their ministerial counterparts who, in the words of Gilbert Tennent (the New Light Presbyterian whose sermon on "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" became a rallying cry during the first Great Awakening in the mid-eighteenth century), "have not the Courage, or Honesty, to thrust the Nail of Terror into sleeping Souls." Wherever one listens for the evangelical voice, this theme of outrage at clerical insouciance is audible. Ministers, it says, have become polite and coddling. Established churches have become tombs of the soul. The charge may be heard against the hierarchy of the Anglican church from Southern Baptists, and from circuit-riding frontier Methodists against Presbyterians and Catholics, and even from New England Transcendentalists against what Emerson called the "corpse-cold Unitarianism" that made him feel "defrauded and disconsolate" in his pew.

This call for hot religion has been the evangelical keynote. It is an emotion more than an idea, but behind it lies a conception of history. "The historical development of Christianity," as Hoftstadter observed, "was not an accretion of valuable institutional forms and practices but a process of corruption and degeneration in which the purity of primitive Christianity had been lost." If not necessarily anti-intellectual in Hoftstadter's sense, evangelicalism in all its forms has been broadly anti-institutional. It seeks to retrieve the birth moment of Christianity, when Jesus walked among men so they could hear and touch him, and when churches were spontaneous gatherings of men sharing their sense of having been delivered by this messiah from the trial of life and the fear of death.

For everyone born since the crucifixion, the great problem is how to recover this sense of intimacy with Christ. "Give me Christ," as the dissident Anne Hutchinson declared in early New England, where most sermons, she thought, were fast becoming scholastic and deadening. "I seek not for graces, but for Christ; I seek not for promises, but for Christ ... tell not me of meditation and duties, but tell me of Christ." And so the evangelist tends to preach outside settled churches (Hutchinson was expelled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for holding unauthorized religious meetings); and with the centuries' long expansion westward and southward toward an ever-receding frontier, the evangelical preacher becomes a galloping crier of the gospel. He evades—and sometimes invades—the stultified church where, he says, worship has degenerated into rote, and, often by preaching God's coming wrath against his enemies, he tries to recall pseudo-Christians to the original power of the imperiled faith. Then he departs to repeat the saving visit somewhere else.

To the usurped local clergy, this kind of itinerancy has often seemed a form of charlatanism perpetrated by men who go through the motions of the priest-

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hood without accepting the pastoral responsibilities it entails. Here is how one Anglican church official reacted to Whitefield's claim (in the words of the outraged observer) that he was "a special Messenger sent forth from God, and therefore not bound to give Proofs or Reasons of his Message." For this irate Anglican cleric, such a demagogue would bring back the chaos of Cromwellian England, when self-proclaimed prophets of all sorts roamed the land:

> On my demanding the Credentials of his Mission, he ... only tell[s] me of certain inward Motions, Impulses or Feelings he had of the Spirit ... My Brethren, we have had enough of such Pretenders and Pretensions to the Spirit!—Look back to the Oliverian Days,—what Ruin and Desolation such Pretenders brought upon the Kingdom! How they did swarm throughout the Nation!... Beware therefore, my Brethren, of such Pretensions;—of the old Story over again! How intoxicating, how fascinating things are an agreeable Voice and Manner of speaking? The only Excellencies of this Preacher. Take these away;—put his Discourses into the Mouth of an ordinary Speaker, I dare say, no one would step out of his Way to hear them.

More or less the same charge has been made at every phase of evangelical history—from the frontier circuit-riders to the age of radio, when Billy Graham was born.

Today, Graham is the undisputed evangelical champion of the world. His autobiography measures his success mainly quantitatively, in crowd sizes: 100,000 in Yankee Stadium; 250,000 in Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro; 1,000,000 in a park in Seoul. But if the scale is new, the technique is old. Along with his sermon and the interludes of devotional music, a typical Graham service includes professions of faith from "witnesses" who speak of how Christ healed their once-broken lives. In this respect, Graham is true to the principle, as articulated by the leading theorist of evangelical religion, Jonathan Edwards, that "scarce any one thing has so great an influence to awaken sinners ... as the tidings of a sinner's repentance, or hopeful conversion." Here is the animating principle of all revival meetings (and quasi-religious support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous) —the idea that by telling their own stories, witnesses to hope can make their conversions contagious.

But after we marvel at the number of converts, what do we learn of the effects on their lives? Graham reports that when he arrived in London in 1952 to plan his first British Crusade, and addressed a gathering of wary Anglican churchmen in Westminster, "the part of the speech that apparently made the deepest impression on my audience was my honest discussion of the major criticisms of mass evangelism, including the danger of false emotion, the potential overemphasis on finances, and the problem of converts who did not last." On the second point, he has been admirably prudent, having set up long ago the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, complete with a governing board that controls investments, expenditures on films and television time, donations to charity, and of which he is a salaried employee. But how does one determine whether the emotion at his packed rallies is spurious or authentic? In the context in which he performs, what does "conversion" mean? On the occasion of Graham's first rally in New York in 1957, Reinhold Niebuhr posed the question by asking what it could mean to achieve "a new life, not through painful religious experience, but merely by signing a decision card?"

Just As I Am does not confront this question. A relentless chronicle of dealings with presidents and prime ministers (who seem almost compulsively inclined to confide their spiritual anxieties to Graham), it is little more than just another celebrity autobiography—the fluff one expects from most politicans, newscasters and movie stars. It rattles off the great public events of the last fifty years with the hero in ubiquitous attendance, a kind of clerical Forrest Gump. One particularly grotesque caption accompanies a photograph of Graham, dry under a makeshift shelter, preaching to American soldiers who are standing exposed in the downpour: "Preaching in the pouring rain to troops in Vietnam, December, 1966."

In this book, everything is softened into a newsreel blur of ceremonial handshakes and public smiles. "Today," Graham writes, "it may be hard to recall the sharp divisions and controversies that sometimes marked Protestant-Catholic relations back then—even during John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1960." Hard, indeed—and he does not make much of an effort. Nowhere in the book do we find mention of the notorious episode when Grady Wilson (in a statement that Graham never repudiated) announced Graham's refusal to sign a pledge to keep religion out of the campaign, and charged that at a special mass somewhere in Latin America, a Roman Catholic congregation had prayed that Graham's plane, on its way to a crusade in Brazil, would crash.

On the matter of race, Graham advertises his cordial relations with Martin Luther King Jr. and insists on his long-standing commitment to integrating his Crusades, recalling in particular a rally in Chattanooga in 1953, in which he personally tore down the ropes separating white seating sections from black—an act that provoked the resignation of the head usher. But he does not consider the challenge—issued, again by Niebuhr in 1957—that his evangelical message should do more to "incorporate the demand of love transcending racial boundaries" and become "a wholesouled effort to give the Negro neighbor his full due as a man and brother."

Graham explains his reticence on the racial question as essentially tactical. Rather than join King in the streets, he "followed his advice" to "stay in the stadiums," so as not to alienate his overwhelmingly southern white audiences. Perhaps he did coax this constituency along toward accepting integration. Yet the fact is that his voice was never raised very high in the national struggle for racial justice in the 1950s and '60s, whereas on some of the other failings of secular culture—its materialism, its sexual laxness—the unreticent and untactical Graham was loud and clear.

When Graham looks back to the Vietnam years, we hear mainly about presidential friendships—with Kennedy, who lured him into a golf game after the 1960 election so they could be photographed together for the benefit of residually skeptical Protestant voters, and with Nixon, for whom he became virtually the White House chaplain, but whom he seems, on reflection, to distrust. In a chapter called "My Quaker Friend," he gets defensive ("I did not have to distance myself from Watergate; I wasn't close to it in the first place"), and writes about Nixon that "in retrospect, whenever he spoke about the Lord, it was in pretty general terms." As for the president who envisioned a Great Society while committing the United States to the incalculably destructive war, there is a poignant moment when Johnson, expecting to die soon, asks Graham to preach at his funeral. "You'll read the Bible, of course, and preach the Gospel," Johnson said. "I want you to." Then, pausing, he added: "But I hope you'll also tell folks some of the things I tried to do." When the occasion arrived less than two years later, Graham's response was to call Johnson "a mountain of a man with a whirlwind for a heart ... [whose] thirty-eight years of public service kept him at the center of the events that have shaped our destiny."

This is the essential mode of *Just As I Am*. Written with self-protective tact (at one point he uses the word "alleged"

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to describe the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Paraguayan dictator Alfredo Stroessner), it never rises above genial banality. The point is not to fault Graham's eulogy for Johnson for its bland neutrality (he "shaped our destiny"), or to chastise him for being cautious on race, or squeamish about Kennedy, or too loyal on Vietnam, or even, across the decades, for his unseemly craving to be cozy with the powerful. The problem is not the failures, the problem is the refusal to reflect on the failures. Inwardness should not be missing from a religious book.

The real disappointment of Graham's book is that it gives hardly a clue to his remarkable power to attract and to hold a following of millions. His voice is muffled by the patchwork of this collaboratively constructed memoir, which puts one in mind of Emerson's remark about his favorite Unitarian preacher that "his eye and voice could not be printed, and his discourses lose their best in losing them." Why have so many people been calmed and consoled by this man, and, perhaps, found through him new purpose in their lives?

For one thing, Graham makes no one feel uneasy about belonging to the wrong church. He is the original inclusionist. Nor does he denounce false doctrine as heresy. He conveys respect for almost any expression of the religious impulse, including Islamic, Hindu and other non-Christian forms, while reserving his contempt—usually modulated into a gentle expression of sorrow—for the godless. He himself is denominationally mobile. He has been baptized three times—as an infant in his parents' Presbyterian church, then again, in "an adult act, following my conscious conversion," as a student at the Florida Bible Institute, and finally at the age of 20, when it was suggested to him that he would be unwelcome in Baptist pulpits unless he received proper immersion in the Baptist way. Ever since, he has preached with equal fervor to many species of Protestants, to Catholics and even to Jews, always insisting that "my goal was not to get people to leave their church; rather I wanted them to commit their lives to Christ." (On crusade in Israel, he was careful not to "call" Jews to Jesus, but commended them for having prepared the way for Christ's ministry.)

But more fundamental than his ecumenicism is his promise of deliverance from fear, as when he reflects on his childhood:

> Whenever a cow died, we hitched up the mules and dragged the carcass to a far corner of the pasture, where we buried it. The rest of the herd followed along with us, mooing mournfully as if they could feel bereavement ... There was a graveyard not too far from where we lived. One day—this was when I was a little boy—my father and I walked by it when we were hunting. It was almost dark. I had to reach up and hold tight his hand. Even when I grew older, I used to lie awake at night and wonder what would happen to me if I died. It upset me to pray, "If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."

For the evangelical Christian, the moment of conversion comes when the fear of being eternally alone gives way to the prospect—the certainty—of being soon enfolded in the arms of a caring God.

Graham conveys this expectancy with simplicity and gratitude. Undiscourageable and gently self-deprecating, he is free of the anger that seems to animate other televangelists. He may be the best modern exemplar of what the first American Protestants called the "plain style"—a homiletical manner free of adornment and abstraction, and devoted, above all, to transmitting the gospel to "the meanest understanding." As one of his friends puts it, "An evangelist can't be complicated. They are great persuaders, not explainers."

He does not puzzle over the Biblical prophecies or try to calculate where we stand on the time-chart that leads toward apocalypse. When asked (as he was by David Frost in a recent interview) for his views on thorny theological questions, he tends to demur. Controversies that have driven Christians to dispute, to schism, and even to war are likely to elicit from him the intellectual equivalent of a shrug. "There will be a day of reckoning," he supposes, "when God closes His books on time and judges every creature, living and dead"; but on the question of what will happen to the souls of non-Christians, or to those who lived and died before the Christian era, or whether Christ will return after a thousand years of harmony, or will descend with sword and fire to lead his legions against the forces of evil, Graham is serenely agnostic.

Leaving all the worrying about such matters to God, he says, with a stoic and deeply American practicality, that we cannot know, and so should live one day at a time. His focus is resolutely on the individual life—on the businessman deadened by routine, the alcoholic fearful of life with (or without) the bottle, the couple contemplating divorce, the parent unable to contain rage at a child. Graham addresses his audience as if he knows each of their most private anxieties, speaking of the patriarchs and

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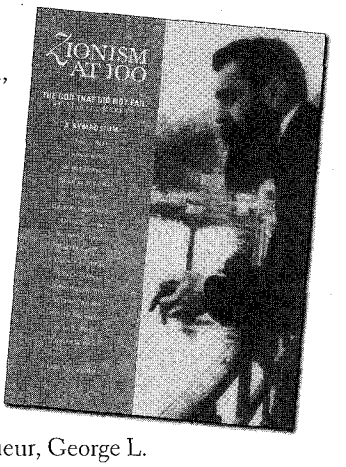

Reprints of *The New Republic*'s recent symposium, "Zionism at 100," are now available for purchase. Published on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the first Zionist Congress, this commemmorative issue features an interpretative essay by Martin Peretz, editor-in-chief, titled "The God That Did Not Fail," focusing on the successes and complexities of Zionism and how they have changed the character and destiny of the Jewish people. It includes the reflections of Daniel Bell, Leon Botstein, Arthur Hertzberg, Michael Ignatieff, Tony Judt, Charles Krauthammer, David S. Landes, Richard A. Landes, Walter Laqueur, George L. Mosse, Cynthia Ozick, David Pryce-Jones, Michael Walzer, Steven Weinberg, Leon Wieseltier, Ruth R. Wisse and Edward Witten.

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apostles and of Christ himself with an immediacy undiminished by time, as if the centuries between a biblical story ("Potiphar's philandering wife") and today's personal stress (the girl with "a reputation for 'making out' ") vanish in a flash.

Despite, or because of, his own unshadowed certainty of where he stands with God, Graham has a kind of tranquil modesty, an aw-shucks contentment to let the master planner do his inscrutable work. In this sense, his closest analogue in the postwar years is surely another vastly popular figure with no head for details—Ronald Reagan, who spoke almost mystically about the national destiny, and with the same confidence about his own righteousness. Graham may not be sure about the theological fine points, but of one thing he is alarmingly certain: "I knew," he writes about his decision to submit to baptism for a third time, "that God had already made me a member of the Body of Christ, visibly expressed on earth in the Church, and that human labels could not affect my standing with Him one way or another." The confidence is breathtaking. Compare it to the Puritan divine who remarked nearly four centuries ago that "a holy despair in ourselves is the ground of true hope."

In an adoring chapter, Graham describes Reagan with the telling word "winsome"; and it is a word that could be appropriately applied to himself. Once a strikingly tall man with dramatic golden locks, he is now a little stooped, but still with flowing hair. He cuts a genuinely imposing figure not only in the history of American evangelicalism, but in the broader cultural history of the second half of the twentieth century. The reason is that he taps a deep current in American life: the great public yearning for some transcendent truth that could link the past with the future and by which one might comprehend the fleeting present. It is insufficient to dismiss this great communicator as a master of the sales pitch. Even the strenuously critical Niebuhr judged him to be "obviously sincere."

Anyone who has lately listened to Graham and watched him is likely to agree. He can charm the opposition. He speaks affectingly of his past excessive zeal for "the American way," and seems genuinely enlarged by his travels—sobered, even shocked, by the world's multicultural cruelty and indifference. There is a hint of embarrassment at his own once-shrill equation between communism and sin (he tries to distance himself retrospectively from Joseph McCarthy, whom he never denounced during the Senator's heyday), as he redirects his attack onto our engorging consumer culture that, with the death of state socialism, has been left without a coherent ideological challenge.

Above all, Billy Graham is the man who made revivalism safe for television. He proudly recounts his early adoption of color broadcasting technology and his shift from live coverage to the strategy of taping and editing for later release, in order to allow "building in musical and other features that would appeal to viewers." Other pioneers of TV religion—such as Fulton J. Sheen, whose one-man format of religious instruction was almost professorial, or Oral Roberts, whose hokey revival meetings featuring miracle cures failed to make it onto prime time in the big markets—never quite mastered the medium. By turning his Crusades into a kind of variety show, Graham has adapted to changing taste, and has remained a presence from the bygone days of Dave Garroway to the age of David Letterman.

In the end, it is this master performer who emerges most clearly from this memoir. He is a man whose legacy is more likely to be stylistic than substantive. (His son Franklin, who is now taking over much of his ministry, is an eerie mimic of his father's voice and gesture.) Graham diluted evangelicalism—whose early history as a fierce populist movement is excellently described in Christine Heyrman's recent *Southern Cross: The Rise of the Bible Belt*—into a respectable religious style to which two recent presidents have willingly, indeed eagerly, laid claim. One of the marks of this new respectability is its retreat from old-style hellfire preaching. If Benjamin Franklin was amazed at "the extraordinary Influence of [Whitefield's] Oratory on his Hearers, and how much they admir'd & respected him, notwithstanding his common Abuse of them, by assuring them that they were naturally half Beasts and half Devils," Billy Graham's brand of evangelism has become gentle and utterly undemanding.

And there is a still more striking change in Graham's evangelical style than this shift from imprecation to flattery. The most thoughtful of his predecessors in America's pulpits—from the studious Jonathan Edwards to the fiery abolitionist Charles Grandison Finney—were exercised by the question of how to distinguish between mere passing shows of religious avowal and durable changes in the repentant sinner's life that signify true conversion. Edwards, wary of those who crisscrossed the colonies claiming to have been visited by God, insisted that the only true mark of regeneration is a lifelong commitment to "Christian practice." Finney thought it "easy to distniguish ... deceived professors from saints by looking steadfastly at their temper and de-portment in their relations to reform":

> The true saint denies himself ... Has he held slaves; been engaged in any traffic that is found to be injurious; has he favored war through ignorance? .... Let but a reformer come forth and propose to discuss the tendency of such things; let the reformer bring forth his strong reasons; and, from the very nature of true religion, the saint will listen with attention ... and suffer himself to be carried by truth, heart, and hand, and influence with the proposed reform, if it be worthy of support, how much soever it conflict with his former habits.

There are traces of such demands in Billy Graham's brand of evangelicalism. But finally he is less the reformer of souls than the inventor of sound-bite religion. His speech is less likely to contain images of hell than metaphors of the theater. "In the United States," he reports about his visit to Britain in 1954, "there had just been a shooting in the House of Representatives, and two congressmen had been injured. I requested special prayer for them. That incident gave a backdrop for my message on the universality of human sin, and the need we all have for God's forgiveness."

The stagecraft ("backdrop") overwhelms the message ("the universality of sin"). Perhaps the strangest effect of *Just As I Am* is that it leaves us with a sense that we have seen this modern-day Whitefield through the perspective of an admiring non-believer such as Franklin—who regarded the great revivalist as an impressive producer and performer, but missed entirely the existential ground of his appeal. For Franklin, Whitefield's genius was chiefly acoustical:

> He had a loud and clear Voice, and articulated his Words & Sentences so perfectly that he might be heard and understood at a great Distance, especially as his Auditories, however numerous, observ'd the most exact Silence. He preach'd one Evening from the Top of the Court House Steps, which are in the Middle of Market Street, and on the West Side of Second Street which crosses it at right angles. Both Streets were fill'd with his Hearers to a considerable Distance. Being among the hindmost in Market Street, I had the Curiosity to learn how far he could be heard, by retiring backwards down the Street toward the River, and I found his Voice distinct till I came near Front-Street, when some Noise in that Street, obscur'd it. Imagining then a Semi-Circle, of which my Distance should be the Radius, and that it were fill'd with Auditors, to each of whom I allow'd two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more than Thirty-Thousand.

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This reconcil'd me to the Newspaper Accounts of his having preach'd to 25,000 People in the Fields, and to the ancient Histories of Generals haranguing whole Armies, of which I had sometimes doubted.

When Billy Graham packed Yankee Stadium at the start of his campaign to go national, there must have been 30,000 people on the playing field alone. They came, and they still come, to hear the man who embodies better than anyone the spiritual hunger and the self-acquitting sentimentality of postwar American culture. Graham has built a church of appearances. What happens to that church in the intervals between broadcasts is a mystery that his book does little to illuminate. Perhaps, when the television goes dark or is filled with the usual noise, it ceases to exist.

ANDREW DELBANCO'S new book, *Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now*, has just been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

BY PETER SCHNEIDER

The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape by Brian Ladd

(University of Chicago, 271 pp., $29.95)

Anyone who knew Berlin before the wall came down, and who drives around the city today with those old images in mind, can hardly keep from getting lightheaded. The aftershock of the seismic change that brought down the wall in November 1989 is finally starting to take on a visible shape. Since the stone-cold heart of the divided city was surgically removed, there has been nothing but frenzied activity along the scar. Giant cranes swing back and forth, and strange-looking construction vehicles excavate pits, up to eighty-five feet deep, from which entire city neighborhoods emerge. This cleared border territory has become the largest inner-city construction site in the world. At a weekly, even daily pace, new buildings sprout up along the former periphery that has now become the center. In the middle of the old city, a new one is emerging. Its rhythms can only be imagined; no one knows what kind of life it will impart to the setting. For the time being, Berlin is a city in transition, a place that lives primarily in the past and the future, not the present.

The task that confronts Berlin's planners is extraordinary. Indeed, the likes of it have never been seen before in history. Where and when has it ever happened that a new center had to be built in the middle of a 700-year-old city? A city that for the past forty years had two of everything—state opera houses, television towers, television channels, soccer teams, weather maps, world views and types of Berliner—is now trying to find a single heartbeat.

Normally the center of a city develops first, and then it impresses its character upon the neighboring communities and districts that eventually become part of it. In Berlin, this process must be reversed: the center must be shaped last, after the fact, along the eastern and western borders of the former "half" cities. But how? By whom? According to which plans? Should the standards be set by the architectural history of the city, or should something new be tried? And if "historical" Berlin is to serve as the model, which historical Berlin? The Baroque city, the Classical one, the Berlin of Bismarck, the modernist Berlin of the 1920s? And what to do about Berlin's fascist and socialist periods? Surely they, too, are part of its architectural history.

Berlin has been famously "united," but can a city that was devastated and fractured by a history of its own devising ever really be a united city again? These are all far-reaching questions about which people may have conflicting opinions. In Berlin, they are being discussed primarily by "experts," and the discussions are usually marred by political slander. The intellectual silence, the sense of being shut up in the past and inhibited by memory, is astonishing. What is sorely lacking is an element of curiosity, of play, of adventure. The debates about the city's future, insofar as they take place at all, look mainly like political exorcisms. In Germany, you cannot argue about a recipe without someone bringing up Hitler's cook.

The debate about the architecture of Berlin has been similarly stalled by ideological suspicions. The question of whether the city center would be built, or should be built, or could be built, light or heavy, out of glass or stone, was loaded down with so much historical baggage that in the end there was room only for confessions of faith. The Berlin architect Hans Kollhoff had hardly cast his thoroughly apolitical vote for a "stone city," and expressed his doubts about the blessings of modernism when Heinrich Klotz, the former director of the German Museum of Architecture in Frankfurt, discovered "hints of fascist architecture" in Kollhoff's plans. The American architect Daniel Liebeskind, who was unable to push through his plans for the Alexanderplatz, felt haunted by the era in which the concept "degenerate art" was born. And so on.

The noisy quarrel among the Berlin architects made its way into newspapers and magazines around the world, and architectural models and blueprints achieved the same newsworthiness as neo-Nazi firebombings. Everything became weirdly coded and ludicrously symbolic. Glass, steel and aluminum windows signified plurality and democracy; stone, mortar and wooden trim signified reactionary temperaments and monolithic social structures. As if one couldn't build lightly with stone; as if glass and steel were immune to dullness. There arose a sort of religious war between a new historicism and a new modernism, in which the protagonists used their rolled-up blueprints as lances against one another. In the judgment of the public, victory in this war belonged to the one who knew how best to deploy his ideological and rhetorical weapons. The question of beauty, or of the habitability of a building or a neighborhood, was usurped by the question of a particular architectural plan's ability to come to terms with the past.

But a guilty conscience does not make a good architect. Indeed, history teaches that a beautiful city is not built by political correctness. It requires imagination, power, money, an aesthetic sense, a pioneering spirit. Every beautiful city that we know—Florence, Venice, Paris, Chicago, New York, Dresden before the war—owes its success to the fortunate mingling of these factors. And finally it is individuals, not political programs, that determine the shape and the look of a successful city. A citizenry with pride

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in itself and its city will find its architects. And the first agreement that such a middle class and its architects must reach is that building a city is an adventure, and adventures can go awry.

But Berlin is suffering from a dearth of confident and optimistic citizens. There are too few people who are prepared to entertain a bold idea of what their city should look like. The coercive community of socialist East Berlin was not exactly a biotope for the pioneering spirit. Yet even the western half of the city slumbered away in isolation, an indolent and luxurious sanctuary of freedom and intrigue and anxiety. In such an unworldly hothouse, interesting plants thrived. West Berlin became the capital of minorities: gays, lesbians, radicals, anarchists, dog owners, cyclists. But a sophisticated middle class was missing. Of the city's Jewish inhabitants, Theodor Fontane long ago remarked that "every freedom and element of finer culture has been transmitted to us above all by the wealthy Jewry"; but they were murdered by the Nazis. And later the educated and enterprising middle class that had saved big cities such as Hamburg and Munich from demolition abandoned Berlin after the appearance of the wall.

The German public, moreover, has not really developed a tradition of debate on urbanism and urban architecture. Until not too long ago, it was easier to find an essay on post-structuralist literary theory in the newspapers than a thoughtful discussion of a new neighborhood. Only gradually has the idea begun to circulate that the city's planners and architects belong to an underestimated profession. A politician can be voted out of office after four years, but a poorly designed building or square will be with us longer. The deeds and the misdeeds of architects remain in the community for centuries; and the experiences of the past fifty years do not necessarily support the conviction that cities become most successful when they are left to the "experts."

If a book can have the power to change a public debate, then *The Ghosts of Berlin* is such a book. Among the many new books about Berlin that I have read, Brian Ladd's is certainly the most impressive. He has a rare combination of talents: he can pursue an original idea for hundreds of pages analytically *and* anecdotally. A city, says Ladd, is not just what we see; not just a sum of buildings and building histories. The structures themselves, the squares, the plans of the streets, speak to one another, complement one another, and fight with each other—and the most vociferous partner in this endless conversation may be the absent partner, the buildings that once stood but were demolished or destroyed.

Missing buildings or squares do not vanish. They live on as the ghosts of their places, and they affect the designs of planners and architects, for better and for worse. "Buildings matter," Ladd says succinctly. "[But] so do statues, ruins, and even stretches of vacant land." Ladd's discussion provokes a larger conclusion. It is that what we consider beautiful or ugly answers to the universal laws of aesthetics much less than we would like to think, if indeed such laws exist at all. Cityscapes are responses in stone: they formulate their answers to the questions posed by the cityscapes that precede them, which, for good and bad reasons, have been bested by time. Buildings and squares and neighborhoods are myths of identity built at the cost of billions, and they react to myths that have died or been destroyed.

Ladd has a well-trained eye for visible things, but he is really an archeologist of the invisible. He is an exorcist of architectural ghosts. And no city is more suited to such a method of inquiry than Berlin, which has been destroyed by war and again by reconstruction. "Even many Germans might agree that German history carries with it a heavier moral burden than, say, American history. But perhaps it is also true that the Germans, more than the rest of us, are facing up to the moral dilemmas inherent in a national identity." And Ladd's approach also owes its success to the fact that he is a good storyteller. His history of Berlin's architectural successes and failures reads entertainingly like a detective novel. He has a Barthesian eye (and mind) for detail.

Consider his discussion of the rivalry between two highly symbolic buildings in reunited Berlin: the Palace of the Republic (Honecker's "Palazzo del Prozzo") and the (now invisible) Royal Palace of the Prussian Kings. The Royal Palace, whose impressive Renaissance façade partially survived the Allied bombings of 1943-45, was razed in 1950 by order of the regime in East Berlin, much to the dismay of many Berliners, east and west. In the 1960s, the "Palace of the Republic" was constructed on part of the land. At the time, many Berliners, and not only in the west, viewed this simplistic shoebox by Heinz Graffunder as a monument of socialist arrogance and vulgarity. After the collapse of the wall, however, the winds began to blow differently; and now, according to the designs of the new victors from the west, the socialist "Palazzo del Prozzo" is to be torn down and the Royal Palace is to be resurrected.

Courtesy of Landesbildstelle

POTSDAMER PLATZ, CIRCA 1930

West Berliners saw Honecker's palace primarily as evidence of the failed socialist state hegemony. For East Berliners, however, the huge and homely box had become a part of their home. Not only did it house the assembly hall of the powerless parliament, it was also a meeting place for the common folk: for rock concerts, theater productions, dance performances. People married and celebrated their marriages in the Palace of the Republic. "Perhaps nowhere else in the world," Ladd writes, "did a parliament share quarters with a bowling alley."

In March 1993, it appeared that the Senate of Berlin had finally found an unimpeachable reason to tear the palace down. It was reported that there was an intolerably high amount of asbestos

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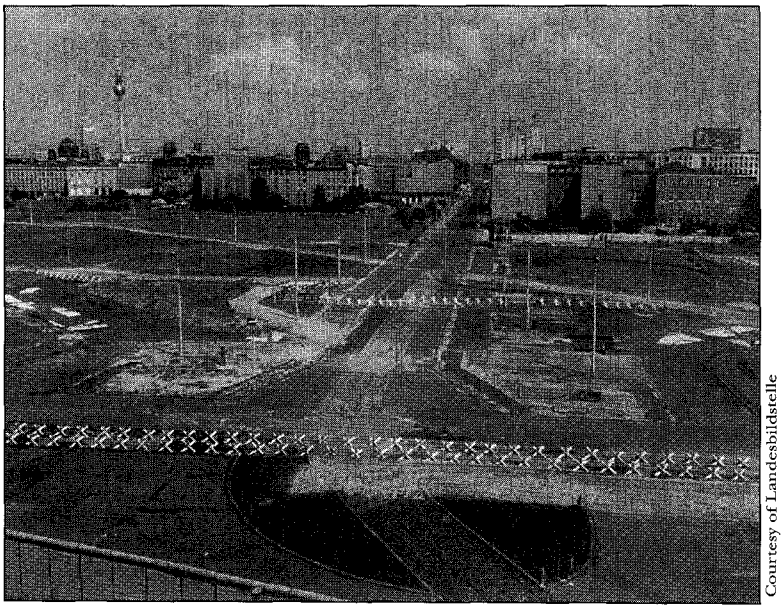
in the walls of the building. In a debate about symbols, however, there are no unquestionable facts. Ladd smartly exposes the distortions in the attorneys' arguments in the battle of the palaces. The asbestos in the building became a political substance. "For many of the building's supporters, it became an article of faith that the declaration of contamination ... could not be measured by any engineer. The application of asbestos during the building's construction had in fact been carried out according to procedures imported from the West." It didn't take long for the lawyers for the "Palazzo del Prozzo" to counter that a building in West Berlin, the Congress Center, was contaminated to a similar degree, but no one thought of tearing it down.

In no time at all it became obvious that those in favor of tearing down the building were not thinking only of the health of the citizenry. They were planning to make room for the Palace of Kings that had been leveled in 1950, to rebuild it—to revive the ghost. A new chorus of protest arose, and not only from the east side of the city. The critics charged that the reconstruction of the Palace of Kings would represent nothing more than a "declaration of victory" in the cold war. It would rehabilitate the Prussian monarchy and its militarism. But Ladd counters these voices with the ease of a ghostbuster who knows his ghosts.

The palace was essentially completed prior to the death of Friedrich I, before one can discern anything resembling Prussian militarism or German nationalism. Several later kings lived there seldom or never—including Wilhelm I, who presided over German unification and was the first Hohenzollern to be called emperor. Also—an important if rarely voiced argument for the palace's friends—it can be seen as uncontaminated by the stain of Nazism. It played essentially no role in the Third Reich. Hitler, wary of any sentiment to restore the monarchy, shunned the building.

The Palace of Kings, like the Louvre in Paris, was one of the finest large structures in the city; and Ladd rightly points out that more than a few historical monuments in Europe (the Campanile in Venice, Goethe's birthplace in Frankfurt, the Charlottenburg Palace) "are counterfeit buildings, damaged and rebuilt more than once." For the time being, the battle of the palaces has been put on hold by an unexpected force: a shortage of money. And so both giants stand across from one another waiting for the next round, the one empty, the other invisible.

In similar fashion, Ladd tells the story of other buildings and squares that have served as symbols of the city's ever-changing identity: the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag and, of course, the Berlin Wall. "The Wall became an unintentional monument to the remarkable era in which two rival states simultaneously claimed Berlin. The division marked by the Wall, in turn, grew out of the shattering era of German history that culminated in World War II. Thus the wall was built—literally and figuratively—atop the ruins and memories of Berlin. The Wall—from concrete, to monument, to rubble—gives form to the story of Berlin and of Germany in our time."



Courtesy of Landesbildstelle

POTSDAMER PLATZ, CIRCA 1972

With a superb chapter on the "Potsdamer Platz," Ladd continues his ghost story. This square, on which Europe's first traffic light was erected, and which was known as its busiest intersection, became a wasteland after the Wall went up.

Two ghosts hovered over the new Potsdamer Platz: radical 1920s modernism and its 1930s successor, Nazism. The first, architectural modernism, had begun to make inroads into Potsdamer Platz in the late 1920s, notably with the new Telschow Haus on the corner of Potsdamer Strasse. The more celebrated building, completed in 1932 on the north side of the square, was Erich Mendelsohn's Columbus Haus.... This brings us to the second ghost of Potsdamer Platz, the ghost of Hitler, who came to power a few months after Columbus Haus was completed. Nazis and modernists were enemies, and Hitler's new Berlin looked very unlike Mendelsohn's; and yet it is too easy to see Nazism and modernism as polar opposites. The Third Reich, after all, was the dark side of speed, motion, and industrial modernity: air travel and air forces, autobahns built for tanks and armies, boxcars full of Jewish prisoners, industrialized death on the battlefield and in concentration camps.

Erich Mendelsohn was a member of his era's avant-garde. He constructed the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, and had a special affinity for the theory of relativity and for Nietzsche's idea of "the transvaluation of all values." In 1927, Mendelsohn declared that "only he who cannot forget has no free mind." As Ladd observes, "his declaration ... recalling Nietzsche's attack on historical consciousness, half a century before, takes on a chilling ring in post-Holocaust Germany." And yet Ladd concludes that "in rebuilding the Reichstag, Potsdamer Platz, and its old urban grid, Berlin has chosen to embrace an early phase of modernity that concluded in 1918, and to distance itself from more recent and disquieting assaults on tradition."

What we might learn from Brian Ladd's ghost stories is this: planners, architects and citizens love to justify their plans for the future by adducing the past. But the past that they speak about is not the past. What they find in the past is often what they read into it, and usually it is a disguise for the interests of the present. Learning from the past is a difficult and unlikely thing. We do learn from the past, but usually the wrong things.

Alexander Mitscherlich, with his wife Margarethe, wrote the enormously influential book *The Inability to Mourn*, in which he pointed out that the Germans never awoke from their past emotionally: instead of mourning Hitler, they denied their love for him. In one of his essays, Mitscherlich warned that cities cannot be created by cars—and now, twenty years later, his metaphor is weirdly premonitory. A giant automobile concern has emerged as the leading developer of Potsdamer Platz. The city government had acquired a giant parcel of

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land on a spot over which, in any other city in the world, investors would wrestle for every square inch. According to Ladd, however, "the first, receiving the largest parcel, was Stuttgart-based Daimler-Benz, Germany's largest corporation.... Next came Sony, proposing to build its European headquarters just across the street. The other parcels went to the Hertie department store chain (the successor to Hermann Tietz, with its "Aryanized" name from the 1930s) and the multinational engineering company Asea Brown Boveri (ABB)." So much for the freedom of the free market!

The center of the former and future capital of Germany, in other words, is being shaped by big business. Still, one must be fair. With visionary intuition, Edward Reuter, the head of Daimler-Benz at the time, and the son of the legendary West Berlin mayor Ernst Reuter, acquired the giant tract of land when no one else wanted to build there, that is, two years before the collapse of the Wall. He entrusted the distinguished architect Renzo Piano with the task of building the Daimler city in the middle of Berlin.

In Berlin's jungle of design competitions, the choice of Piano is one of the more fortunate decisions. The Potsdamer Platz Project is "the most complicated that I have ever built," Piano told me. It touches off more than the usual *horror vacui* that accompanies a large project. And it isn't the magnitude of the project that has generated the architect's anxiety. He has built larger ones. What rattles Piano are the ghosts. He recalls his feelings as he stood on the unbroken ground in the middle of the city, a place "which is saturated with history. With every step you feel the ghosts of the past, but they are only phantoms whom you meet, there is nothing that can be seen or touched."

In the attempt to create a living civic body on this erased and emptied ground, Piano says, he felt like a mathematician who stood before an equation in which there were not two or three unknowns, but twenty. Apart from the former Weinhaus Huth and the Esplanade Hotel, there was nothing which he could use as a marker or an orientation. Even a piece of the Wall would have been a welcome starting point; but the Wall itself has disappeared without a trace. Doesn't this new craze to remove every sign of the recent, divided past resemble the fit that led the postwar planners to wipe out every architectural trace of the prewar era? A city is a text that is made up of many pages, and every page counts. In the story of Berlin, Piano says, too many pages are missing.

Piano doesn't believe in the advantages of a tabula rasa. The notion of total freedom is a chimera, and also a poor muse; it serves mostly as an excuse for unimaginativeness, for bad taste. "Look at Siena," he says. "Don't tell me that the urge to use the same stone hindered the architects of Siena from building a beautiful city. Building a new city is a project like discovering a new continent. You set off into the darkness, into the unknown, and you accept the fact that something unexpected will happen. In fact, you wish it will happen to you. Since in the end, it is the extraordinary things, the unplanned incidents, that shape the face of a city. Building is like fishing. Even when the fish you've got at the end of your line is too big, you still try to pull it into your boat." The maritime metaphor comes naturally to the Genoese architect, whose designs are variations of his earliest perceptions in Columbus's port city, where he grew up: sail, mast, rig and tackle, hull, water, wind, sky.

An architect, like a writer, does not really choose his style. And style is shaped by forces stronger than theories. The German architect Hans Kollhoff, who grew up under cloudy Thuringian skies, is at home with Berlin sandstone, and Renzo Piano makes buildings that are like huge floating and swimming bodies. His projects are fragile structures. He favors light and easily damaged materials, which react to the wind and sun and noises, and desire exposure to them; structures that swing and change and wear themselves out like any living organism. Piano is a master of light architecture. He is attracted to transience. His clients are not always pleased by this: the great exploit of his youth, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, must now, twenty-five years later, be renovated at a cost of about $100 million.

When Italo Calvino first saw the spaceship that Piano landed in the middle of Paris, he compared it to a construction site where the plumbers and the electricians had finished and were waiting for the bricklayers, but the bricklayers never showed up. In Calvino, the master of lightness in literature, Piano found a formulation of the architectural principle that he had pursued instinctively. The world, wrote Calvino, is on the way to a gradual petrification that embraces every aspect of life, and so it needs a counterweight, a "weightless intelligence." For Calvino, the hero of this lightness was Perseus. How was it possible for Perseus to escape Medusa's petrifying gaze and decapitate her? It was possible, he wrote, because Perseus supported himself with flying sandals on the lightest materials in the world, cloud and wind.

It is the strategy of Perseus that Piano employs in each of his projects: to annul, as much as possible, the heaviness of matter. Piano began the Potsdamer Platz with an invocation of water—with the idea of a piazza encircled by water, across from Hans Scharoun's library building, with the streets approaching the plaza in the shape of a star. "You always begin with the void, and not with the developed space. It's the empty spaces which build a city." At the same time, he has seized upon the few icons that remain. His design for the theater is a homage to Scharoun's library. The project's entrance tower—the Daimler-Benz office building—borrows from the

Marilyn Monroe on a Merry-go-round: photograph by Eve Arnold, 1954

She's turned a page in Joyce, and goes around
so slowly we can't see it turn; and still
the trees above the August grass surround
the summer star, who on that catherine wheel
forgets herself—and Eve, who's framed this shot
and once held on herself beyond her will:
her legs, her arms to stone, the sun, this blot
of ink. It's Molly Bloom who asks to *feel*
my breasts all perfume yes . . . , or it's a pose
that we might see such concentration dry
her lips. By those few pages left suppose
we know the passage, which runs breathlessly
toward each susurrus of a quickened wish;
suppose the stars, pinwheels, another *yes* . . .

KEVIN CANTWELL

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skyscraper that Mies van der Rohe never built on the site. Mies's hunger to remove all heaviness at a time when it was not technically feasible has impressed Piano. His execution of the plan looks like a wedge of glass and steel almost 300 feet tall imbedded in Brandenburg's sand. And he finds nothing wrong with the fact that it completely contradicts the opposing tower by Kollhoff. Kollhoff has countered Piano's imbedded axe with a tightly organized tower constructed of a stone so dark it seems scorched: "a castle, naturally," says Piano. Axe against stone: why not?

To build a "*città miracola*," Piano maintains, you need a lot of power and a lot of money, but above all you need passion and a sense of play. Piano recognizes the enormity of the architect's responsibility, but it doesn't fluster him. Of course, architecture is a "*servicio civile*," an art that serves a society, and so it must never become exclusively a form of self-expression. But the creativity of successful architecture is not owed to its social conscience. "A person needs a certain degree of irresponsibility in order to build well. A city is also always a personal sketch."

What really concerns Piano is not the size of the Potsdamer Platz project, but the speed with which technology enables cites to be born. The constant development of revolutionary building materials, computer-assisted building techniques, and means of transportation has led to an acceleration of construction and development that eliminates almost any possibility of organic growth. "For the first time in history, a city can be built in five to ten years. You don't have a clue as to who or what will breathe life into the new neighborhood. It must be an immediate success. So you call up the elements of a city that have proven successful: shopping center, movie theater, casino, theaters, squares, and water fountains. You don't let the city life run its natural, unpredictable course. Instead you create a virtual life." Must an architect leave nothing untouched? Can't an architect leave a portion of each project to the ideas and the improvements of future generations? The financial restraints imposed by such giant projects are dictatorial, insists Piano. "An architect is simply a player in a game with set rules. You can reproach him for playing poorly, or not playing at all. But he's not the one who made the rules of the game."

But who makes the rules? Who really is responsible? In the end, the architect will claim that he had to listen to the investor; the investor will claim that he had to respect the city government's plan; the city government will claim that it was working in the best interests of the citizens. And the citizens rarely get a word in edgewise. The speed and the technical expertise with which all decisions must be made are simply too much for them. So can we call a time-out for reflection? Of course not. Markets don't take breaks.

Anyway, a long time ago a referee was found who gives everyone involved in this game of Monopoly the feeling that rules do exist. This referee, who is supposed to embody art, power and democracy, is the "international design competition." It has grotesquely usurped the judgment of the government and the citizenry. The competition provides an illusion of diversity. When 835 architectural firms compete against one another—as, for example, in the design of the government district along the Spree in Berlin—one can expect nothing but the best. Unfortunately, the best is not always the good. "The best" is usually just the boldest and fanciest expression of the zeitgeist and its platitudes. Architecture is perhaps the most worldly art, and so it has always been especially attentive to the prevailing ideologues and their ideologies. That is why identical-looking suburbs spring up all over the world.

Whoever designs Berlin's new center must come to terms with a paradox. Berlin has too much of something that every other historically significant city in the world is lacking: huge, undeveloped land in the middle of the city. And it was not happily that all this space was made available to architects. Everyone with a plan for Berlin must acknowledge that the immense void in the center of Berlin is the scar of a horrible history. It is an almost chillingly appropriate emblem of the larger reality of its place. On a site such as this, "organic" development is just as incapable of dealing with the past as is paving over the giant void with glass and steel palaces. Every solution that strives for harmony will prove inadequate. For Berlin is the capital of disharmony.

Will Berlin survive its reconstruction? An adventure of this magnitude can never be carried out without enormous miscalculations. Still, haven't the tattered, fragmentary, incomplete and diverse elements of the city become its essential attributes? Berlin will never be an architectural jewel; but disharmony has its own way of encouraging life, especially our life.

—translated by Frank F. Wagner

PETER SCHNEIDER is the author most recently of *Couplings* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

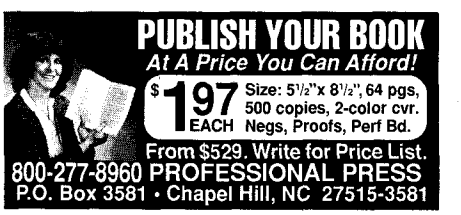
TRB *continued from page 4*

gress would have to explain its hypocrisy.

Instead of hiding behind legalisms about "no controlling legal authority," Gore, for his part, could go on the offensive. He could make the case that Congress is presuming to interfere with the right of the president and the vice president to engage in political speech by communicating directly with constituents and supporters. And even if articles of impeachment never reach the House floor, as they're unlikely to do, the American public could make an informed decision in 2000 about whether they think Clinton and Gore's efforts to raise money for their own campaign are troubling or defensible.

Critics of the independent counsel law have long decried the criminalization of politics. Their worst fears have been vindicated by the spectacle of politicians and journalists calling on the attorney general to call on unelected judges to appoint an unelected prosecutor to decide whether the president and vice president broke the law when they asked their political supporters to support them. It's time for Republicans to make their case in Congress rather than the courts, and impeach Gore, if they can.

JEFFREY ROSEN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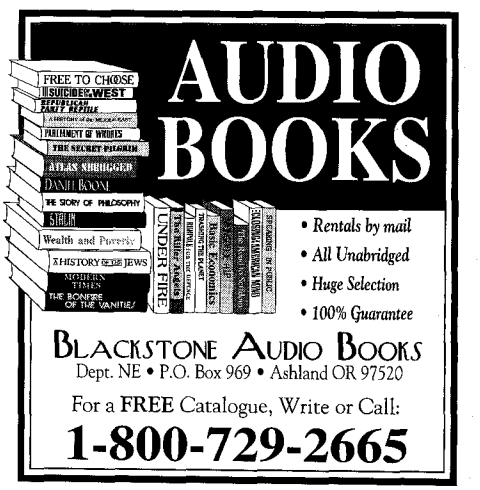
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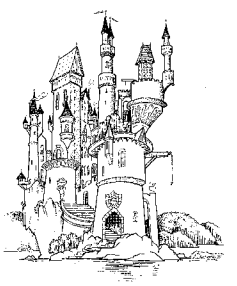
HAMBURG DIARIST

Photo negative

A FEW DAYS OF LISTENING TO HIGH-minded Germans agonize over World War II gave me a strange craving for neo-fascist cranks. So I headed to a gallery in Hamburg that is now showing photographs by Leni Riefenstahl, who everyone but her considers Hitler's propagandist. I was not disappointed. Even by Riefenstahl standards, the exhibition was amoral. Among the fifty or so photos in the four-room exhibition—a few stills from her prewar propaganda movies, a handful of underwater pictures and a large number of photos she took of Nuba tribes in the '70s—a viewer searches in vain for any explanation of her horrid past. (The prewar stills are captioned, absurdly, in Japanese; they were hastily brought back to Hamburg from an Asian tour.) Riefenstahl, who is still clinging to life at the age of 95, must have been very pleased. Even during the height of her revival in the '70s, exhibitions of her art in Europe would be accompanied by text from Brecht, or pictures of concentration camp victims, or at least some disclaimer about her frequent afternoon teas with Goebbels.

THE GALLERY OWNER, ANDREAS Schluter, seemed as shameless as his exhibition. "These pictures have ethnographic, anthropological and aesthetic value," he said bluntly of Riefenstahl's Nuba photos. Finally, a German brassy enough to be politically incorrect in public, I thought—until I picked up a book of Riefenstahl's Nuba photos, and found that Schluter had cribbed that sentence almost word for word from the dust jacket. And so Schluter joined the legion of feeble apologists who have helped Riefenstahl carefully airbrush her life. Later I learned he'd asked for twenty-four-hour police protection in case of threats—though he lacked the courtesy to share his plan with the junkies at the needle exchange center downstairs. Skittish about having cops around, they scuttled his plan, but peace between neighbors was not restored. "NOW SHOWING: NAZI EXHIBITION," declares a sign they hung in their window. "NO COMMERCIALIZING FASCIST AESTHETICS."

THE GERMAN PRESS, LIKE THE junkies, has not been kind to Riefenstahl. And she fights back in her usual mock-simple way. "I did not know what was going on. I did not know anything about those things," she told several papers, including *The New York Times* in August, when asked for the umpteenth time about the Holocaust. "I distance myself from all that." It takes a majestic petulance to describe the Holocaust as "those things" and "all that." And her own I-was-a-child-prodigy memoir betrays her lack of innocence: early on in the book, she recalls a heroic scene of a determined young filmmaker risking her nascent career to protest to Hitler about his treatment of Jews. But, Leni, if you didn't know what was going on, what were you protesting? Her habit of social climbing betrays her as well. Even now, when she speaks of Hitler, she is name-dropping. She recalls fondly Hitler's "sense of humor" at a party, being "impressed" with his "personality" after a walk on the beach. One night, she realized he "desired" her as a woman. Goebbels is annoying because he once grabbed her breasts. ("He wanted me.") And she finally grew tired of Hitler because he disagreed with her views on art.



ANYWAY, RIEFENSTAHL'S PRECISE knowledge of Hitler's crimes is not exactly the point. It's perfectly possible that Riefenstahl is right—she was deluded about the Third Reich. But then she should at least accept responsibility for unwittingly helping to spruce up the Nazis' image. There is nothing in those films about anti-Semitism or race theory, Riefenstahl says blankly in Ray Mueller's documentary about her, explaining why *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* were not really Nazi propaganda. But it is because they omit anti-Semitism and race theory that they *are* propaganda. As Mueller's documentary shows, Riefenstahl's obsession with creating a beautiful, seductive film led her to help stage the second Nuremberg Nazi party congress, so she'd be sure of getting good material for the film. The movie was not propaganda in the sense of a deliberate political lie; it was propaganda in a finer sense, the deliberate construction of a new, whitewashed truth.

SHE IS, IN ANY CASE, BETRAYED BY her art. The further Riefenstahl strays from her fascist ideal, the less inspiring is her work. The prewar stills from *Olympia*, her documentary of the 1936 Olympic Games, are haunting. In the best one, a group of athletes runs along the edge of a pond toward a ghostly fog; they seem frantic, possessed, chased by their own looming shadows in the water. This could almost be a death march, except the energy is channeled into a tight athletic force. By comparison, the Nuba pictures are chaotic and awkwardly framed. If they had not been taken by Hitler's brilliant propagandist, they would be filed away anonymously in some *National Geographic* archive.

HER UNDERWATER PHOTOS ARE A collection of limp failures. These constitute Riefenstahl's attempt at abstract expressionism, at capturing cold, fleshless metaphors. Devoid of emotional content, they were made at a time when she had grown tired of fighting her critics, and was seeking refuge in the moral void of the deep. (No one can call an octopus a fascist.) But they never quite rise to the level of metaphor. Chaotic blobs, in vulgar neon, are framed gracelessly askew. Occasionally you can perceive the hint of a swell of breast in a sea urchin, or a thigh in an undulating anemone, but none rise to the sensual dignity of, say, a Weston green pepper.

POOR RIEFENSTAHL! WILL SHE never be rid of her Philistine critics? The fitful debate over her Nuba pictures has re-emerged, with a modern twist. Nowadays, photographers don't take pictures of developing world cultures without pangs of guilt. If they do it at all, they do it in grainy, off-center shots—a visual expression of the photographer's awkwardness. Riefenstahl's photos are an implicit affront to guilt: naked men and women in their sexual prime are captured in lush color, crisply focused by a steady colonial hand. Looking at them, my German friend could see only Riefenstahl's distorting intrusions. A student of African culture, he became obsessed with proving she had tinkered with the designs of the face masks for dramatic effect.

IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* ARTICLE and in the German press, Schluter has concocted an astounding justification for his exhibition. While younger Germans may abhor it, he says, the older ones leave in a nostalgic and sympathetic mood. This at first seems shocking. What can he be implying? That he's created a haven for Nazi nostalgia? But that can't be it. What Schluter must mean is that the old people are nostalgic not for Hitler, but for a time when an artist could show uncensored, guilt-free beauty, for a time when long-haired, needle-scarred junkies didn't get the last, ugly word. And to be daintily recast as the last protector of beauty would be Riefenstahl's ultimate revenge.

HANNA ROSIN

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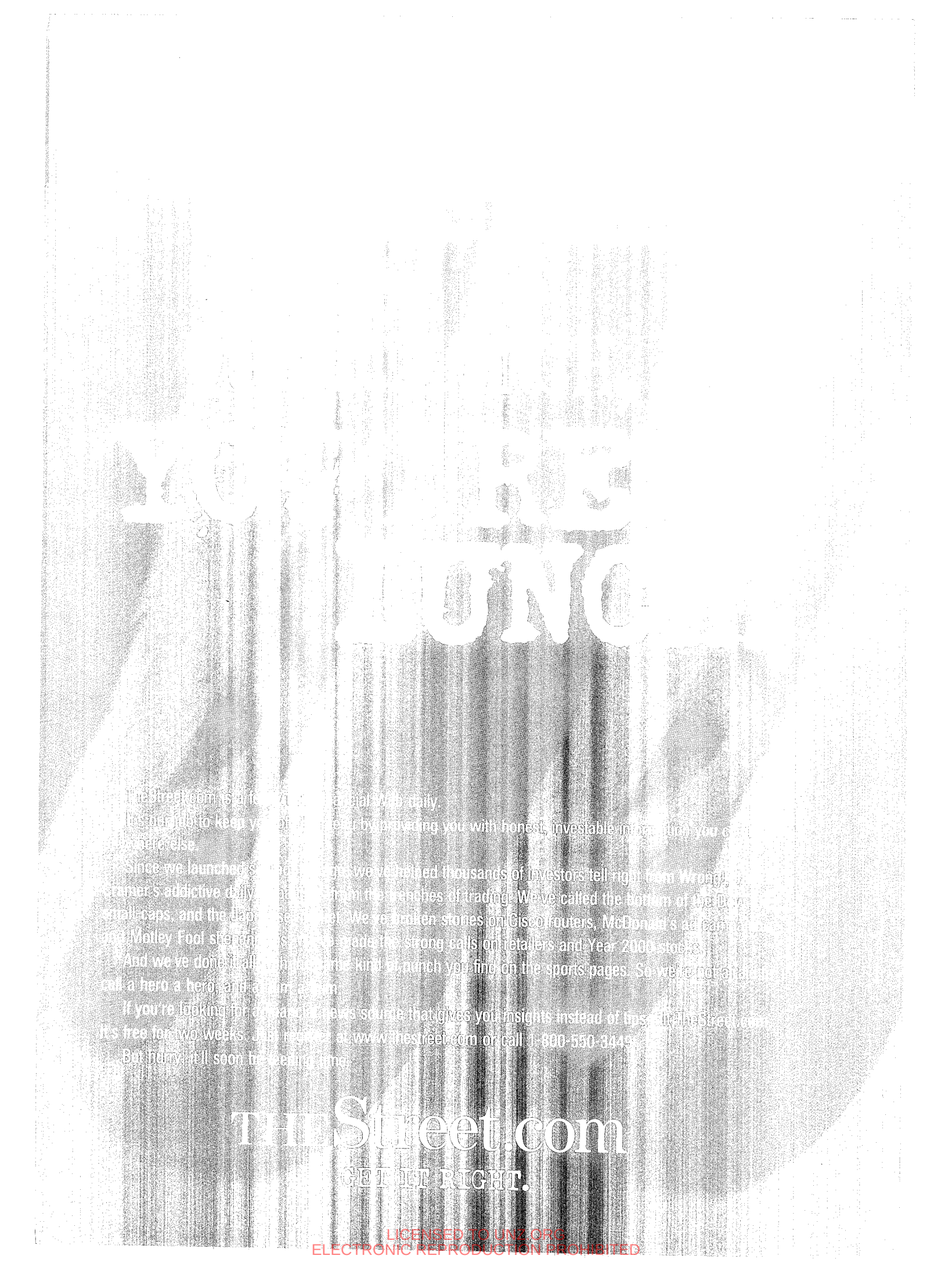

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